The Memoirs of a Failure

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The Memoirs of a Failure

With an Account of
the Man and his
Manuscript

By

DANIEL WRIGHT KITTREDGE

ALBERT BRITNELL
TORONTO, CANADA

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DUNLEVY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

Lest the name of a hitherto unknown author be totally obliterated, I am going to give a description of his curious personality, together with an account of a manuscript in his handwriting, as bewildering as it is extraordinary, from which some extracts are now for the first time brought from obscurity into the daylight of print. I give at once the name of this writer—William Wirt Dunlevy.

It is essential to begin by relating what little is known of the man himself. Otherwise these fragments of his work would be even more inexplicable than if they were presented without comment. Indeed, it is best to admit at the outset that the character of this man and the outcome of his life are subjects which seem destined to remain quite as inscrutable as the meaning of his manuscript. All that lies within my aim or power is simply to try to make known his personality as I have conceived it from the few facts of his life known to me, from his writings and from a slight intimacy with the man

himself. What is finest to me is the man behind the manuscript; and so my part is strictly to essay at interpretative biography. I am about to tell the brief story of a life singularly strange, a life whose overmastering interest is not in public events, not in famous friendships, not in outward adventures, in nothing but in the man himself. I doubt if Dunlevy will make a wide appeal for favor. And there will be many, very many, to whom this whole account will seem not worth while.

Dunlevy was a student at the University of Virginia at the time when some of us, who were undergraduates, began to notice and comment upon his personality. He was considerably older than the other students; and we imagined that this was the reason why he held himself aloof from us. We used to watch him from the athletic field on pleasant afternoons. He was wont to stand on the great flight of stone steps which led from a shaded avenue to gently sloping terraces that lie before the Rotunda, the name of the college library. Dunlevy used to stand at the foot of these steps, looking intently at the lofty porticos, as though impressed with the majesty of this copy of the Pantheon, its majesty in all its simplicity.

The terraces are connected on the sides by

open colonnades, forming two interior courts. In them, for indefinite periods, Dunlevy was accustomed to walk, his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the distant wooded valleys of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We wondered what sort of man he might be, who was as sufficient unto himself as the fixed stars in the sky which radiate no other light than their own.

He came to take his meals in the same dining-hall with us; indeed I sat at the table beside him. I think he liked me, because I let him alone. I did not attempt conversation. It was noticeable that he tried to come to his meals after the others had finished eating. But he found this difficult, as one burly foot-ball player usually remained as long as anything remained on the table. This fellow used to make stupid, broadside sallies at Dunlevy, who had the look of a man who had once been strong and robust, but who was now almost ashamed of his grotesque appearance. Dunlevy did not try to stop the foot-ball player in any of his onslaughts of muscular wit. The latter's name was Crowther. I used to think that Crowther's conception of wit amused Dunlevy more often than it irritated him.

One morning at breakfast I made a most inane remark for a place where all the conver-

sation was devoted to the subject of athletics, such as who was the Harvard full-back in '94 or what was the best batting average last year. My remark was totally out of place, as it had to do with literature. It happened this way: when I came into the dining-hall I noticed a copy of one of Cardinal Newman's works sticking out of the pocket of Dunlevy's overcoat. And as I took my seat at the table no one was saying anything, so I merely remarked how much I admired Newman's style. Every one stared at me except Dunlevy, who was smiling at my thoughtlessness.

"What is it in the cardinal's fashion that you admire so much?" asked Crowther.

"The color of his coat, of course;" suggested Dunlevy with a straight face.

"Why, what color was it?" asked Crowther, seriously knitting his brow.

"He preferred red," answered Dunlevy, "because his books were not read."

The bell rang for nine o'clock lectures; and Dunlevy and I were left alone.

That was the last time we had breakfast together at the University of Virginia. Dunlevy had overtaxed himself by his work in the School of Philosophy, and broke down in health.

All of us knew where he lived, even if none

of us had seen the inside of his quarters. He rented the ground floor of an old private residence which was situated just beyond the University limits. It was set upon a knoll, and from this point one could obtain a clear view of Monticello, the home of Jefferson. I presumed so much upon my slight acquaintance with Dunlevy as to deem it a simple duty to go to see him. I was ushered into his chamber by an old negro servant who had not succeeded in intercepting me. I found Dunlevy propped up in bed, reading a book. He laid it across his chest open, and looked at me as though he could not believe my presence.

"Why, you have come to see me, haven't you?" he said. The poor man seemed to beam at the thought that some one had actually come to call upon him.

"I heard that you were sick."

"And did you let the gentleman in, Sandy?" he asked of the negro, at the same time trying to conceal a frown from me.

"Maarstar, don't you say I done it. He say he be a doctor and was sent for!"

"My trick succeeded even if it was impudent;" I said.

Dunlevy was confused.

"You see—a—I feel a little queer now and

then about the head—that is all—and I do not care to bother others with coming to see me. Perhaps you may know that feeling of all-goneness, as I call it?"

"And what are you doing for it?" I asked.

"Aha!" he exclaimed; "curiously enough I have just come across a short passage in this book that fits your question. Do you mind listening to it?"

He took up the book and read this sentence:

"How hard it is, my dear brother, to recover a little strength when one has become accustomed to one's weakness; and how much it costs to fight for victory when one has long found delight in allowing one's self to be conquered!"

I took out a pencil and paper and asked him to read it again in order that I might write it down.

"And who is the author?" I asked.

"Oh dear!" said he, "you are like all the rest. What difference does it make who says a thing, so long as it is good? And what difference does it make how great a man is so long as he says things which are not good."

Hereupon he reached over to a little reading table at the head of his bed upon which was a single tumbler full to the brim of a thick mixture. He raised it and drank the contents. I imagined

that the man was taking some medicine and that he felt ill. I made an apology for my intrusion and took my leave.

During this brief call Dunlevy maintained a dignity that was impenetrable. He had the power to impose respect for himself at all times, and to do so unconsciously.

As I sat in his bed room I had a chance, as I thought, to take a glimpse of its furnishings, but there were none. The walls were perfectly bare with the exception of one picture, hung so that he could see it from his pillow. It was the portrait of a young girl upon a horse, habited in the style of twenty years ago.

I went to see him again, but I was not admitted by his servant. Before the end of the week Dunlevy had left the University, and never returned.

Nobody missed him particularly, because he had had practically little to do with any of us. There were some stories told concerning his disappearance. One was to the effect that an old mental trouble had come over him again, and that he had retired to his ancestral plantation in Albemarle County, over in the James River country. Though it was admitted that perhaps this old trouble was brought about by overwork, as I have said, still, certain students

used to look wise and say nothing whenever it was given as a reason for his breakdown.

As to what his incubus was or the cause of it, I could not well make out. Two students who came from the same part of the state also sat at our table, and they said that they used to hear their older brothers and sisters talk about Dunlevy and tell how he was much like the rest of them up to the time when he was quite a young man; that he was such a wit and so entertaining, and what a fine dancer he was, and how he used to be asked to break the colts which were to be ridden by the young ladies of the neighborhood. And that he was one of the shrewdest young poker players that ever drew cards from a pack. Then, of course, there was a love affair. Was there ever a young southerner without love affairs? But here, it appears was the unusual with Dunlevy; for he had just one love affair.

He had courted the girl season after season ever since he was fourteen years old, so their tale went. She lived down the river near his home on a big plantation in Goochland County. One of these students said that he remembered hearing his father say that he had often seen Dunlevy as a boy in knee breeches and tan legs drop down on a packet boat when she was going through the locks; and then how Mr. Dunlevy,

senior, would have to send down to Goochland to get him home again. That was in the last days of the old James River canal when traffic with Richmond went by packet. But to go on with what I heard about his unusual case. They said that this couple, young as they were, seemed perfectly devoted to each other and grew more and more attached and tender in their affection up to the time when Dunlevy became a full grown youth.

I am writing this at a distance of nearly a decade since I heard the account and naturally most of the details have escaped me. But as I remember, they said it was one Easter vacation when young Dunlevy felt his blood rise with the sap and determined to see the world by spending a fortnight in metropolitan New York. Probably he took a little undue prestige unto himself, for not many young southerners could afford a metropolitan junket in those poverty stricken days of the Reconstruction period. He made the journey, staying a month instead of a fortnight. Up to this point his case is conventional enough.

When he came back he went on a day's visit to Goochland. The young girl and he went into the parlor together and the door was closed. No one ever knew a word of what took place between them; whatever he told her and what-

ever she responded must have been serious, for when their meeting was over, Dunlevy opened the door and walked straight out of the house without a spoken word to her mother and father, and he never saw her again from that day to this. But she remained true to him, and no other man's hand ever touched her. Dunlevy's life changed; his face changed; his disposition changed; he was literally not the same man. Something had befallen him.

Such was the account that I gathered about him from what the two students told in our dining hall at the University of Virginia. We each of us wondered what had happened to him and put our individual construction upon the bare facts as I have related them. Oddly enough, I remember that a third-year medical student who sat with us remarked with a Carolina accent that he "reckoned" he could tell what was the matter with him. To which Crowther rejoined:

"Well, I always said the man was a damned fool, and now we know it. Pass the pickles."

And so the conversation turned to other topics; and I heard no more of Dunlevy. Thus do men dispose of one who has lived amongst them.

To me the impression that this separation made upon Dunlevy did honor to his sensibility. His existence was stranded. It bears

out my own observation of the man when I say that in the midst of our college fellowship, he reflected at an age when we had scarcely begun to think. Of one thing I can vouch for certain. In the earlier account of him he is drawn as a strapping, active boy with all the suppleness of youth. Whereas the man I met was a strange looking, undersized curiosity. This leads me to recount another incident which is relevant.

One day in the early fall of that year when Dunlevy was forced to leave the university, he sat at luncheon with even a more sombre demeanor than usual. His shoulders were bent with weakness, his face calm but drawn with endurance.

"Why don't you put on some old clothes and go out on the athletic field and get some lively exercise?" Crowther asked, good naturedly.

"Why doesn't a mole see or a snail fly?" answered Dunlevy smiling, though evidently much embarrassed at having attention centered upon him. He finished the meal hurriedly and departed.

Poor man! I look back to those days and realize how little we purblind associates of his knew what a fight for strength he was making before our very eyes. It is one thing to observe suffering, it is another to experience it. Those

who belong to the robust ranks of health, who arise in the morning with a song or a whistle on their lips, and at night drop without restlessness into slumber, those who know not what it is to be nervous and irritable, all those of sound body and sound mind, have no right to pass judgment upon Dunlevy and his kind. I say this because I am reminded that after Dunlevy had gone that day at luncheon, Crowther said to us:

"I don't believe that man would have the spunk to run a hundred yards. He lacks gumption. There is too much of the woman about him. Please pass the pickles."

I pondered upon this utterance as I left Crowther eating his third helping of beef steak. And I wondered which is the more noble—the courage that comes from strength or the bravery born of suffering?

There was one man, a black man, who understood Dunlevy and his condition better than we did. He was that old negro body-servant, a relic of plantation days. I saw his good, open, loyal face when I went to Dunlevy's chambers during his illness at the University of Virginia. His name was Sandy. Could I know what Sandy must have known, I might have a tale that would be better left untold.

DUNLEVY AT HARVARD.

Long afterwards, a year and more, I went to Harvard College for the purpose of pursuing special studies. I was standing one rainy November afternoon in the stone vestibule of Gore Hall. A figure approached with his head close under an umbrella, which he closed as he entered the library. It was Dunlevy. Our eyes twinkled a moment, then we each grasped the other's hand. It was like coming from the cold into a warm room to meet a southerner in New England.

"I am afraid you don't remember me;" I said.

"Don't I!" he exclaimed; "do you suppose I could forget the man who came to see me twice when I took sick at the dear old 'U. Va.' and who is also an admirer of Cardinal Newman's style?"

His memory astonished me; and it touched me to think that the man should be grateful for my simple attention of calling upon him when he was ill. After a few words of greeting I told him that I had an appointment and should have to hurry on, but that if he would tell me where he lived I would come to see him. He told me the number of his room in Beck Hall.

"I have a corner window in the rear;" he said, as we parted.

Well, I went to see him; and he returned my calls, for that was all they were—just calls. Somehow or other, Dunlevy and I were not to become intimate. It seemed as though I were handling a piece of quicksilver on an earthen platter, looking so bright, so impressionable, and yet the moment one would say, "You are mine!" all was gone, scattered and running in every direction, nowhere to be seized. So long as I did not seek to make an intimate friend of him, all went well.

To describe how I felt when calling on Dunlevy, I may do best by quoting this sentence from Emerson:

"He is solitary because he has society in his thought, and, when people come in, they drive away his society and isolate him."

With me he was outwardly cordial and inwardly aloof.

The truth is, no one ever knew Dunlevy well. So far as I am aware he had not a single intimate friend. He walked alone. I used to see him on winter afternoons going up Brattle Street, carrying his head back, his eyes looking upward as though he were studying the leafless branches of the trees. He made me think of what Abbé Barthelemy wrote of himself: "I go on solitary promenades, and when night comes I say to my-

self, 'There is another day gone by.' " I verily believe that Dunlevy was so alone during those days at Harvard that for two months at a time no one entered his room.

At lectures and at meals it was as if he were not really thinking of what was actually taking place in his presence. I do not mean that his appearance was that of a listless dreamer. Nor do I mean that he tried to carry a pose of abstraction. It was simply that he had the nervous, conscious look of an habitual recluse. He might well have said with Rousseau, "Being a recluse, I am more sensitive than other men." He held himself aloof, not wilfully, but because he seemed to have a constitutional inability to adapt himself to others. This reserve was by many mistaken for rudeness.

It was noticeable that he rarely entered into general conversation and that for the most part he kept strict counsel with himself. Yet whenever I felt certain that Dunlevy was utterly inattentive, he had a way of stroking his delicately featured face and then of saying a few carefully chosen words which were sufficient to prove that he took an occasional reckoning of the depth of the persons with whom necessity forced him to have intercourse. Dunlevy had much of the feminine in the make-up of his character, though he was in no sense effeminate.

Usually he ate his meals in silence, surrounded by the students and instructors who throng Memorial Hall. One could see that he hated the puerile discussion and long-winded disputations of Sophomores and Juniors. He had heard them before. Some of the fellows thought him hopelessly conceited, queer, and that he deemed himself "above the common flight of vulgar souls." Others were convinced that the man was morbidly sensitive, diffident, shy, afraid of the light. A few of us knew him to be a sort of semi-sane genius, prematurely old; a disappointed being who wreaked vengeance upon himself by trying to keep others from knowing the cause of his troubles, if troubles there were. In fine, none of us knew anything definitely or specifically about him.

Of course this last statement is not strictly accurate as regards my own slight intimacy with him at the University of Virginia, taken in connection with the hearsay tattle about him there. I went over in my mind the gossip of his love affair, the particulars of which I had not the malignant disposition to relate to other students. Yet I could not refrain from asking, were these two periods in his life forever separated by a sort of moral illness which he could not cure? Else what had happened so suddenly to put an end to the levities of his early life? But it is not my

purpose to tell the story of the lover in Dunlevy.

Let it not be supposed that because Dunlevy came from the South in those days that he was in needy circumstances. Such was far from the case. His rooms were in what was then the most expensive of dormitories. This was one of the strange things about him, like his dining at such a crowded place as Memorial Hall. One would have supposed that he would have sought a secluded peaceful spot. He preferred, as it were, to live in the midst of social life, and yet take no part in it. In like manner, he had very little intercourse with the Boston world, and, so far as I know, he made but few excursions into that City of Inconsistencies. The fashionable cafés and hotel lobbies were not rendezvous for Dunlevy. Nor those pseudo-Bohemian joints, where students imagined they "were seeing life" and the seamy side, these tinsel vacuums apparently had small attraction for him. And most peculiar of all, if by chance he were discovered in one of these places by somebody like myself who knew him, he would bow cordially, and soon afterwards pay his check and depart. Even to laugh or sneer at garish pretense, fashionable or unfashionable, had become a bore to this lonely mortal.

Apparently, he was one of those who like to observe without being observed. This trait must

also have been an outgrowth of the man's morbid sensitiveness. Balzac in a letter to Madame Hanska says: "It is only mis-appreciated souls and the poor who know how to observe, because everything wounds them, and observation is the result of suffering. Memory keeps a record only of what is painful." This last view strikes me as being erroneous, but the first part of the great Frenchman's comment is applicable to Dunlevy.

As to his wealth, he told me once that his father had owned extensive sugar plantations with four hundred working slaves in Louisiana, besides their farm lands in Albemarle County, Virginia; but that his father had lost all in the war of the Rebellion. I looked at him in wonderment.

"But," he added, "after the war was over, an immense deposit of coal was discovered on a tract of land belonging to my mother. This mine saved our family fortunes."

Dunlevy had with him in Cambridge the same aged man, the full-blooded negro of the old regime, who, he said, had been his father's body-servant during the war and who was with him when he was wounded at Manassas. I have mentioned having seen this man in his chambers at the University of Virginia. He was constantly attendant upon Dunlevy. He appeared to wor-

ship him and to love him as if he were one of those god-descended heroes about whom the ancients tell us. And Dunlevy on his part seemed to be in perfect contentment with this one man. He said that now that all of his own family were gone, the old fellow was the only remaining human being who connected him with the past. The two seemed inseparable. I state these things about him, because Dunlevy makes reference to one "Sandy" in his papers and I want it to be clear that it is to this aged family retainer he refers. Moreover, when persons told me, as I relate below, that no one would answer Dunlevy's door—that door with hinges oiled lest their creaking grate upon his nerves—I used to take it to mean that he had instructed Sandy to pay no heed to their calls unless he bade him.

And now for the stories about his being dissipated. Gossip said that Dunlevy was what is known as a solitary drinker. Students who roomed in the same dormitory with him said that he barricaded his doors and would not answer knocks for days at a time. That when they first met him upon his coming to Harvard at the beginning of the college year, he used to make engagements with them and then invariably break his appointments at the last moment by sending Sandy with a scrap of paper looking as if it had

been taken out of a waste-basket and scribbled upon in the extremity of indecision.

In regard to these insinuations, I can only speak of my own experience. On three occasions (two of them were appointments) I went to Dunlevy's door and I tapped and I knocked and I pronounced words in vain like Ali Baba's brother in the robbers' cave. Another night late, I went unexpectedly to his door and met the janitor of the dormitory coming out of his rooms. He said that a student had told him that he saw flames coming out of Mr. Dunlevy's windows. I supposed it was merely a practical joke that some undergraduates had put upon the janitor in order to disturb Dunlevy. I prevailed upon the janitor to let me enter, as he said that Mr. Dunlevy was within.

"I have brought you over that work on Ethics about which I spoke to you yesterday at the philosophy lecture," I said, entering his study and finding him in a long silk dressing gown and wearing a pair of stunted Chinese slippers. He had in his hand a tumbler full to the brim of a heavy mixture.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as if he had received a shock, and was momentarily pausing over his surprise, "how the devil did you get in here?"

"The janitor let me in," I explained; "I met him at your door as he was going out."

"Oh—that was it—was it? Well—a—sit down, won't you? This is a funny get-up you've found me in—isn't it? You wouldn't think to see me in street attire that I wore this sort of thing—would you? I say, a—have a drink, eh?"

I said that I would have a glass with him, at which he appeared to be rather taken off his guard and confused.

"Well, I'll tell you," he said, "this is a beverage of ante-bellum days, a sort of compound potpouri or strong sangaree of the olden time—you wouldn't like it. But I will send Sandy out for anything you say?"

I insisted upon taking what he was having. He hesitated for a moment as though I had put him in a predicament, and then he called out:

"Sandy! Bring the gentleman a glass of our sangaree."

During this brief colloquy Dunlevy kept shading his eyes from me as if he did not care to have me see his face; and after giving the order for the liquor, he drew his chair up close to the fire-place so that his back was towards me. Even while he had been speaking these few words to me, his face and figure attracted my notice. His expression was a blending of artlessness and of shrewdness. He seemed to be one of those men who try to keep you from believing that they have a heart, when

their gracious bearing and gentle mien give their tongue the lie.

So long as you do not try to make an intimate friend of him, I said to myself, all will go well.

But after he had once invited me to share his rare beverage I could perceive that there was an intangible metamorphosis going on within him. It reminded me of Mr. Mansfield playing the character of Dr. Jekyll just before becoming Mr. Hyde, only with Dunlevy the character change was exactly the reverse: the genial GOOD in him seemed to thaw out. His eyes, usually drunk with thought, were now radiant and watery with feeling. His sensitiveness appeared to tingle in every pore. Perhaps he anticipated the effect that his liquor was to produce upon me.

The negro brought me a glass filled with a thick posset. I drank a quarter of the tumblerful before I could take it from my lips.

"My soul! what is this?" I asked, still tasting the grated nutmeg and the old-fashioned flavor of wild-cherry bounce. It seemed also to leave that delicate bouquet of real Medford rum.

"You speak as though it were ambrosia," said Dunlevy over his shoulder from his chair before the fire, "but as a matter of fact it is only sangaree. You see the reason I was surprised to see you was that I every now and then have a spell of sick-

ness—feel queer about the head—that is all, and I don't like to see anyone, you know; but as the janitor let you in, I am certainly glad to see you and I reckon you won't mind me h'eh in this costume." Here his southern accent broke out.

"But this sangaree!" I exclaimed, finishing the liquor, "how in Heaven's name is it made?"

"Really I couldn't tell you," replied Dunlevy calmly, "Sandy makes it for me. He used to brew it or mix it or distill it, whichever you please, for my father before me. Didn't you, Sandy?"

"Yess, maarstar," said Sandy, "that ah did! Right h'eh in this ole bowl, too, that Gin'rl La Fayette give to ole maarstar's maarstar."

"Sandy," interrupted Dunlevy, "I wish you would go down and tell the janitor that I wish to see him tonight."

It occurred to me, not only from this remark, but from the fact that I noticed a large writing book open on the centre table, that I had interrupted Dunlevy in his work, whatever it might be, and that it was high time for me to depart. The book was an odd looking volume as large as an office ledger, only very thin, and bound in sheepskin like a law book. Dunlevy had evidently been writing in it or was just about to do so, for a wet pen lay in the crotch between its pages.

"Pray don't hurry;" he said conventionally, as I took my hat.

"I came up merely to give you the book on Ethics," I answered, "and I would not have stopped at all, had you not asked me to join you in that beverage, and had I not felt that I needed some stimulant on this howling first of March. Good-night.—I say, would you mind giving me the receipt for your sangaree some day?"

"Aha!" he smiled, "that's a secret which I have never been able to worm out of Sandy."

And so Dunlevy and I separated practically at the point where we had met. Sandy escorted me to the door, and as he closed it upon me, I thought of both him and his master as two of the last representatives of an epoch, an epoch of landed proprietors, of loyal passionate blood, full of warmth and of color and of stately grace, into which a modern American may never hope to enter. I, for one, gave up the attempt. With generations of slaveholders behind him, it was not hard for Dunlevy to become a Sybarite. I would I were mistaken, but it struck me that the only live color of his college days were these nights of revery, nights such as when Omar awakened. From his appearance that night, I feared that in this respect he lived without constraint according

to his inclinations. Here surely was one man who had determined to let the world go by.

As I walked down Holyoke Street that night to my room, I tried to phrase the attractive impression that Dunlevy had made upon me; and from thinking of him many times since then, I have finally found words which describe his elusive nature, a nature leading me by eluding me. The words were said of Grimm in his day:

"He is perhaps the only man who has the faculty of inspiring confidence without bestowing it."

Before the end of the session Dunlevy had left college again and disappeared for parts unknown. I suppose a new fit of restlessness had seized him. He must have been one of those men who are led by successive impulses and are unable to settle upon anything. No excuse was given and no word was left as to whether or no he would come back until finally a storage van appeared at Beck Hall and carted away his effects. Neither did he return to college the following fall. I lost trace of him completely, yet I used to wonder how that man would "finish," as race-horse men express it; for one may study men as a trainer does a string of horses and bet against them or bank upon them, and it is always interesting to see who loses and who wins, who it is that keeps whipping to the end in the face of certain defeat, and who it is

that loses hope, lags behind and drops out before the stretch is reached. I had wagered upon Dunlevy as a man who would some day carry his colors ahead before the judge's stand. Perhaps I was mistaken about him from the point of view of the world, but, friend, way down in the bottom of your soul don't you sometimes admit that there are other points of view than that of the WORLD as we call it? In that case, it may be that Dunlevy has won. Who knows?

The day after my class festivities at graduation were over, I was seated in my room which was littered up with the remnants of packing, when there came a knock at my door.

It was only the postman who said that he had a registered letter for me. I signed its receipt, and sat down on my trunk to read it. The handwriting was unfamiliar. I am going to give a copy of its entire contents in order that my position in this matter be made perfectly plain. Secondly, my part is to explain my own connection with the subject of this biography, and thereby to account for its publication. I have before my eyes this letter:

"San Diego, California,
June 22.

My Dear Sir:

In the piece of tissue paper which is folded within this letter you will find a little silver key. It opens the lock of a wooden safe which I am forwarding this day to your care.

I am about to ask a favor of you, if I may, as I know of no one else of whom I might make the request concerning which I am now to write you. I have no near relatives, so far as I know; may I therefore take the liberty of forcing you to be my friend, because I want some one to know what became of me.

This little wooden safe contains a book of my private papers. Now I enclose to your order a postal draft for forty dollars, which will pay for keeping this box in some safe-deposit vault for a period of six years. If you do not hear from me on or before the twenty-second day of June of that sixth year from the present you may conclude that I shall have ceased to live. I am confident that if I am ever able to return again to civilization it will be within that period. If not, it will mean that I am gone beyond the hope of return, and in that event, these papers become yours to do with them what you will. I put aside ideas of the future as best

I can, and allow myself to be carried along by destiny.

Do not infer from the fact that I wish these documents placed in a vault that I consider them valuable. Such is far from the case. I want merely to be sure that in the event that you should die, they would fall into no other's hand in case I might return. To be frank, they are scribblings descriptive of personal sensations and remembrances during a long period of time, that is all.

In after years, if I do not return, read these papers, providing you have nothing better to do. May their record awaken within you some apprehension of a similar fate had I given you the receipt for the strong sangaree which you drank at my room in Cambridge on one occasion, when I must have been an object of suspicion to you. Its maker, Sandy, my old body-servant, sails with me today. I may yet overcome myself; but if not, this, then, is my good-bye to you.

W. W. Dunlevy."

The next morning an express package arrived, and I carried it, box and all, into Boston to a banking house on State Street, where I placed it in their charge, together with the forty dollars for its six years' safe-keeping.

Those six years have passed and more too; but no word from Dunlevy. Nor have I been able to gather any information as to his present whereabouts.

I hesitated about opening his box, but still he had empowered me to do so. I found the odd looking writing book in brown sheepskin which I had seen open on his centre table on the evening long ago when I found him drinking his sangaree. The pages were covered with his nervous, irregular handwriting.

I started to read, and I read until the oil ran low in my lamp, until the birds began their twittering in the dawn of the coming day, until I had finished the last sentence in the book. I should advise no one to attempt a similar feat, if he hopes to obtain any satisfaction from these fragmentary writings. I read them as I did, not because I found them captivating or thrilling, but because I wondered what it all meant. I knew no more than before what was the man's story or what had become of him. Here was a mass of disconnected dreams, allegorical visions, a curious blending of fact, fiction and fancy—or—Heaven forbid—did the man actually feel what he says and do as he writes he did?

Was he simply a literary experimenter? I think not. In reading Dunlevy it is impossible to feel at any given moment that you can take hold of him. There is a curious illusive frankness in his style which gives the effect of making you believe that he is about to open his heart, and then, deftly switching the subject in such a way as to leave the impression that he has told what he intended to and yet left nothing to which he could be held. He is like a magician in that he is always supersensitive about being watched, and by turning back his sleeves to invite confidence, he finally leaves the stage without emptying his pockets. As a reader, I felt that in spite of the commonness of the first personal pronoun, it was the letter and not the self. Yet this does not seem to be an intentional effect on the part of Dunlevy, for even when he expresses affection he is still reserved and abstract. In fine, the result is a peculiar power of being intangible. I can't tell for the life of me if his facts are also a part of his dreams. And yet none of them last in space for more than a few pages of his manuscript.

Only one fact seems to me certain, both from the internal and the external evidence. It is that this strange mixture of writings was composed and written down at the various times when Dunlevy was either partly or wholly under the influence of

that strong liquor of his. Its very influence over him appears to have interested him, and here and there he jots down the most minute sensations, as if he were studying its effects introspectively.

When works are in a manner the offspring of idiosyncrasy, then, to understand them, it becomes indispensable to link together, as I have tried to do, the circumstances of their production. It is not Dunlevy who gives vent to the temper of his moods, but it is the subjects of his moods which take possession of him. These visions or what-you-will, had to be, and they had to be precisely as they were written. From this arises their amazing and disappointing inequality, their chief fault. The fault was born, no doubt, in the more than abnormal conditions of improvisation. What sort of unity, or equality, or connection, could they possess when composed under such chance conditions?

The main thing which interests us in some writers is themselves. We endeavor unconsciously to recover the very states of their minds. So far as they go, Dunlevy's fragments are the source from which we know him best, if he interests us at all. And I shall state here that I purpose as far as possible to print only those writings of his which will help us to know him. We may have no portrait of a man, as is the case with him, we may not

be able to draw his features; these are transitory things; and yet if we can know his mind along certain important lines—that man we have. We know nothing of Ecclesiastes, yet we know rather definitely what manner of man he must have been. And so with this unknown man whom I once knew and this obscure work of his, dishevelled and small as it is, we come to see that it took the place of the illusions he had lost; and therefore he tells us what he was and who he was by a process of elimination. The whole manuscript proves what I said at the outset: no one ever knew or could know Dunlevy well. To the critical eye these writings simply reveal a man of such abnormal imagination that his visions became real to him.

And now lastly, I want to make the ethics of my position in this matter clear. I did not think for an instant that I had any right to give even a few of these papers to the public. It was to me a breach of trust. However, after more than a year of bickering with my conscience, I have reasoned myself out of that position. Perhaps the very words of Dunlevy's letter, "these papers become yours to do with them what you will," showed that he had an idea of their publication. I doubt that, though I must confess that he makes occasional allusions in the writings themselves which would tend toward that opinion.

What prevailed upon me in the end was their value, for value I felt they had. Whether they would excite general interest was no concern of mine. If they are of value, why then I feel that I have no exclusive right to them. I wish it distinctly understood that I do not publish them as possessing literary merit, but as writings which will help to depict the character of a man who had had unusual potentialities, and wasted them as a result of the incidents and habits of his early life. These fragments have but one real value—the portrayal of a man bordering upon insanity, fighting to maintain his balance in the midst of bitterness, and struggling to prove to himself that he had reasons for becoming a dissipated wreck. We look about us and we see many really brilliant men who go down to self defeat. Why is this? We do not know. But Dunlevy's fragments are descriptive of the mental condition of one amongst them. It is due him to add that he is conscious of his own shortcomings, for he himself gives these papers their title. To sum up, it is as if his book were a diary of visions, without days or dates or places, having no connections, no continuity, no coherence, no unity—except for being the work of one author, that morbidly sensitive, disappointed, solitary pessimist, William Wirt Dunlevy.

It may be said of my introduction that I have

erected a large portico to a small dwelling. That may be; but it was once the spiritual abode of a lonely man.

The specimens that I am about to give are taken at random; for I repeat that his writings in their original form had no evident arrangement. In Dunlevy's book they are merely separated by the end of a leaf or a blank in the page. Nothing connects them but the fact that they were written in one volume by one man. The Roman numerals which I have placed on the successive blank pages are to indicate, therefore, that there was a break in his manuscript. The following is the first in his book.

The Memoirs of a Failure

I

I have had occasion to remark how suddenly alcohol may affect the brain if taken on an empty stomach; I shall now illustrate the impression of one stupor after a heavy meal. Last night I drank freely during a long dinner, and when I arrived at my lodging-house, I felt completely overcome with fatigue. After climbing the five flights of stairs to my room, I sank into my arm-chair with the sensations of vast bewilderment and drowsiness. The small squares in the window frame before me merged into the darkness, and I looked out into the crisp moonlight night as if nothing were before my vision. I thought that it was the last Sunday morning in August, as yet in its freshness, long before the steady glare of the noonday sun. I was sitting, as it seemed to me, on the porch of my old plantation home; and my negro servant had just told me of his readiness to dress me for breakfast. Right before me lay the long, rectangular lawn bordered by the grove of chestnut trees. There was the same spreading poplar with the sheep nibbling its fallen leaves; and the same zig-zag fence against which some of them were rubbing themselves; I could even see little strands of grey wool on the splints in the fence, and over the top

rails I caught the same glimpse of a curve in the James River, which can really be seen from this point; but the river seemed muddy, as if from recent rains; I saw a hawk rise and grow dim into a speck against the sky as he disappeared down stream.

Looking in this direction led my eyes to rest upon the old clay road which was then a highway crossing our plantation, and down which I saw my father ride off once, never to return. Along this same road now came a young horsewoman with an escort of two negro out-riders. The trio came nearer and nearer until they reached the long driveway bordered by boxwood hedges that led up to our house from the clay road. I recognized her—Susanne, Susanne, wearing a sun-bonnet with ribbons streaming out to the wind, her bosom rising and falling in the excitement of the ride as she urged her bay mare along between the rows of boxwood, the out-riders keeping in her dust. Her lips are red with life and laughter. I remembered the last time but one when I saw her, she kissed me again and again in the bloom of first love, of only love. "Ah, we are together once more, dear, in the happy long ago!" I was different then. I seem to feel the pressure of those lips; methinks I even hear her now, her voice ringing with the love of love

and of life. "For life is love;" she used to say. But come I must go into the house and dress to meet her.

For a moment longer I gazed upon this well-known scene, and (as I thought) I heard myself say, "Take me back, oh, take me back again, to the time of youth, and when all nature seemed a friend." . . . At that moment my arm slipped, I grasped hold of the side of my arm-chair, but not without coming forward with a start. . . . Susanne! A name forgotten on my lips, yet always speaking and calling to me with the tongues of memory. How strange are remembered kisses upon lips that are dead

II

This night I am guest at a banquet. I am seated next to my host who is a rich man, ah yes, we are all rich men; and he is dining and wining us in celebration of the anniversary of his birth. The table is a long one and is stretched away into a double banqueting hall. The guests are assembled. An orchestra is playing. There is much wine, and food in abundance is passed before us, and we make merry. Course after course is served before us—turtle soup, timbales of pheasant, terrapin, Kennebec salmon, venison, pates of birds in jelly, aspic of plover eggs—bah! I am satiated and can eat no more—and yet now the dessert comes on the table, course after course, but instead of eating anything more I turn my chair a little sideways so that I may shade my eyes and see into the next room. The hall wherein we sit is lighted with brilliant spangles of bright bulbs and dangling prisms, and the whole of our room is surrounded with great mirrors that we may see ourselves feasting and drinking and making merry. But lo! as I shade my eyes and look down the table, it seems to stretch away into a dimness beyond my sight, and seated at the other end of the table in the next room are

countless guests; but they are glum and not merry. Upon more careful scrutiny, I observe that this adjoining room is dimly lighted and that there is no food upon the table, neither is there liquor for them to drink. I can see snowflakes falling in the darkness without; I can see it through the crevices in the windows of their room; whereas in our hall the blinds are down, the shutters are closed and the curtains are drawn close.

Every now and then, one of those who are sitting at that other end of the table in the next room way off there in the dimness, would rise, shove his empty chair under the table and make towards the door, but on his way out he would have to pass by my host. As one after another of them drew near, I noticed their wan, care-worn faces. Each one as he passed my host, stooped over and said, "Good-night, brother; you wouldn't let me eat and I have to go, for all the food is at your end of the table." Then each would shut the door behind him as he went out into the darkness.

"Who are they?" I asked my host, putting my fingers to my ear that he might whisper.

"They are the poor," he answered, contracting his eyebrows, "let me fill your glass."

He filled it to the brim; but in a moment of impulse, I arose and dashed the glass against the wall.

The breaking of the glass and its pieces falling on the floor brought me to my senses. Sandy came rushing into the room. "There is a tumbler over there. Bring me in another;" I said to him. He picked up the broken bits of glass and brought a cloth to dry the stain on the wall-paper where I had thrown my sangaree.

I fear that I shall not be able to sleep this night. Oh, if I could get just a little sleep—

'the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.' "

III

Another novel read, another history finished, anotner biography turned over—enough of them. I am done with them. I prefer to empty another pitcher. Give me my sangaree and my own thoughts in preference to their twaddle. And why twaddle? Well, because each and all of them have a hero—a good man, or a great man, or a successful man, or a man in love with a woman, or a man in love with himself—whereas I am none of them, and I want to hear about myself. I want to hear about a failure. A man who sadly admits that he is a failure. These, then, are the Memoirs of a Failure.

Certainly there have been more failures than heroes, but fiction delights to mock the failures merely to set off the hero. Surely there have been more obscure men than famous men, but history records chiefly the attainments of the leaders. Whereas, the unknown soldier, the insignificant clerk, the patient craftsman, the underpaid writer and teacher—these humble workers had their story, perhaps more touching and perhaps less callous than the career of the noted artist, the famous statesman, the great general.

Who shall write the Epic of Unsuccess—the song of the Vast Obscure?

Did you want to paint?

And have you found that you could not? I have.

Did you try to preach, and lose conviction?

Yes, catechiser.

Did you strive to write and find that you had nothing to say?

I opened a lumber-room of useless odds and ends.

Did you see corruption and poverty and vice, and wish to conquer them?

It was a futile task.

You are soothed by music, but the art is another's.

True, I have no genius.

What have you, then?

Nothing, but my foiled desires. My dearest hopes are rendered unavailing.

And why are you so?

Ah, that I do not know. Ask the hero, the successful man. He can tell you what I lack. I met a drunken man who said:

"Two kernels of corn fell on the ground, and sprouted in the self-same way. A toad hopped along and passed his dung at the roots of one, while the other shrunk in the shade."

IV

I have taken more than my usual quota of this pleasant stuff. Why not? Why not? It helps me to get away from this world of conventions and mortal routine. I like to watch the rays of fire-light glistening through the glass and liquor. I am loggerheaded. I can see my eyelashes.

Here comes one with a birch canoe. I get in. A tanned figure bare to the loins, without a sign of passion in his face, holds a paddle aloft as if awaiting my orders, a paddle curiously carved like a totem pole.

"Row to that floating bed of water lilies yonder that I may see their upturned faces of gold."

The paddle dips noiselessly, the ripples make rings on the glimmering surface of the lake. I hear the water slush the bottom of the canoe. It sways until I can see over the sides and down into the green undergrowth of the lake where sun-fish and rainbow trout flash about in the slender thread-like leaves, as though they were swimming in the delicate, green foliage of a sunken tamarack forest or virgin growth of wild asparagus. What a cooling sensation it is to let the water trickle through the fingers as the canoe is paddled along. A little herd of four deer are coming down a woodland path to the border of

the lake on the opposite shore. There are three does and a buck. He courts one of them, rubbing the underpart of his downy neck across her back. She shows her little teeth and leaps nimbly from under him, frisking her little cotton tail to and fro. I wonder for how many centuries that path has been trodden down by the light patter of their forefathers' feet? I hear squirrels chattering, and I see them pursuing one another. A pair of wild ducks are diving in a little bay beyond, and another pair are mating near them on the land.

"What is the name of this northern swamp?" I ask. But the figure answers nothing at all. I take it that he, too, is one of its aboriginal inhabitants. What a ceaseless propagation has gone on here—when did it begin, when will it end? Life is to give life. "And you, you dumb being, are you happier without words and gibberish? With you there is no vice, for you mate as naturally as the wild ducks yonder. You have no slander or back-biting, then. No boring conversations about social nothings. No nasty words or thoughts! Your mind is as pure as the roebuck's on the water's edge." But the figure answers nothing at all, deftly paddling on and on, until I hear the roar of rapids ahead. It must be the outlet of the swamp. The waters grow disturbed, rocks peer through the surface, foam eddies

round them. I can see the rush of the current by the leaves and twigs hurrying by. We are shooting the rapids. The figure backs water, the foam rushing up his bare arms. But he can not stop us, the canoe will strike that rock ahead instantly! He jumped and disappeared with his paddle. The next I know I am thrown forward—

Here I awoke, striking my head in some inexplicable manner against the leg of my centre table, yet for a moment I seemed to feel the closing in of waters around me. Ah, why couldn't it have lasted a little longer and then I should have been asleep. My tumbler, half full of sangaree, is spilled on the carpet about me. Sandy has brought me some witch-hazel to rub on my head. It is very sore from the blow against the table.

V

How one warms the blood: how two taste bitter and sweet: and the third glass—that's the end of me. Let us take a trip, Sandy, and escape from the bores. Be sure that you bolt the door.

I have received this minute another invitation to that distant land which lies far out from the beaten track, neither is it found on any map. I travel thither in the same fashion that the Arabian princes used to travel with their genii, and the pointed tops of trees and sooty chimney pots sweep under me, roads and rivers flying beneath look like threads in a motley loom, everything is going and whirling. . . . Aha, here I am once more on my fourth visit to this land of the Inconsequentials. I am a friend of their ruler, who is the soul of ingenuity, and to whom they give the unique title of Excelsior, if I may translate the word literally, meaning more lofty. Usually I find it bitter cold here.

My chief design at this moment is to describe one of the luxurious diversions of this potentate. I had His Majesty's permission to be shown over his magnificent demesne. The sieges of extreme

cold weather caused him to have built a curious structure, built entirely of glass, and covering an area of eighteen acres. There were three divisions of six acres each, used to represent the three seasons other than winter; so that His Majesty, rolled in an upholstered chair along tan-bark walks from one section to another, could experience respectively the sensations of spring, summer and autumn.

In the first park, the grass was kept young and green by constant irrigation; cherry and crab trees were forced to blossom, and as soon as they began to wither, they were replaced by others; birds were mating and singing at such close proximity that one screeching varlet passed his dung on my bonnet. At the end of the enclosure depicting summer, I saw His Grace stretched out in a cushioned hammock before a fountain. He had one eunuch sprinkling perfume about him, while another kept flies off his bald pate, and a third was squeezing drops from the petals of clover blossoms into his open lips.

Upon approaching the royal presence, I bared my arms which is the custom in this country.

"Here I am, O Excelsior, on a relief expedition from the land of the Yankee bores, as your Supreme Armpit chose to call them on my previous visits, judging me as a sample of my countrymen."

I translate the word "Armpit" literally which is used by the natives in addressing their ruler, wishing, as I suppose, to signify either that his arms are more beautifully rounded and developed than those of his subjects, or that the shoulders are more lofty and are on a higher plane than the rest of the body. His Grace motioned to the eunuch to cease the spraying of perfume and the dropping of clover juice that he might acknowledge my salutation.

"You speak of being here on a relief expedition," quoth he; "whom, pray, are you to relieve?"

"Myself," said I, for I had found on previous visits that the surest means of flattering His Royal Axilla was by depreciating my own countrymen. But this time it seems I was mistaken.

"I take it that you are a failure in your native land," quoth the ruler, "for those who are failures are usually 'bored', to use your tongue. Is it not so, thou parasite of the warm ocean land?"

"True it is, O Excelsior," I replied, "but my failure is due not to me; it is the fault of ——" Here he cut me short with an interruption:

"Those who are failures," quoth he, "ever place the cause of their failure upon others, while those who attain success always accredit it to themselves."

I thanked His Majesty for these kind words of wisdom, and was about to take my departure when he asked me if I had seen the new instrument of punishment which he had just had erected. Upon my replying in the negative, he said that I could obtain a good view of it from one of the windows in the royal bed-chamber, and that as he himself was going thither to take his two o'clock siesta, he would gladly show it to me in person. I thanked him with many encomiums upon his hospitality, and we proceeded to his sleeping apartments.

Upon our arrival at the entrance to his bed-chamber, I noticed that the windows were screened by a series of reflectors, making a curious olio of lights, and there were strips of tapestry in many gradations of color and tone effects. To my query as to the purpose of these massive reflectors of light, the Excelsior replied that he deemed it to be very bad for the nervous system to awake suddenly, saying that this theory is supported by the fact that in a true state of nature one is awakened gradually from sleep by the slow transition from darkness to light. Accordingly, he produced by the arrangement of these reflectors an effect similar to that of dawn, and he could thus be awakened gradually at any hour of the day or night.

"The old-fashioned method of letting up blinds or throwing open shutters," quoth he, "and thereby admitting a sudden influx of bright light is most injurious to the optic nerves and leaves the mind in a drowsy and dazed condition. My optician, whom I have had with me for two decades, agrees with me in this theory. And my invention overcomes these deleterious effects of a sudden awakening."

Hereupon he ordered the eunuchs to slide back the reflectors that he might show me the aforementioned instrument of punishment. We stepped out upon a balcony, and I saw in the courtyard below an immense bladder, supported upon two uprights of timber, like the sweep of an old-fashioned well. This bladder is operated as a whip, only it belabors the victim upon the head. It was thus explained to me by His Majesty.

"For what crime is this used as a punishment?" I asked.

"For those who are unduly given to self-praise," replied the potentate, "and there are two degrees of penalty, first for those who praise themselves directly, and secondly for those who praise themselves indirectly."

"From what class of your subjects do most of these victims come?"

"From all classes," he continued, "but those

who praise themselves frankly and openly are chiefly made up of successful business men, actors and patent medicine doctors; whereas those who are given to praising themselves indirectly, mostly consist of politicians, authors, artists, professors and clergymen; and to this latter class is accorded the most severe punishment."

I observed now that the Excelsior was yawning profusely, and I began to bare my arms and to bow myself out from his presence and to excuse my long visit.

"Wait a moment," he said, "now that you are here, take a look at another invention of mine. There it is in the corner by the hearth."

I turned and saw a large oblong table with three layers of shelves, upon which were rows of bottles with automatic stoppers attached to them. These stoppers or flat corks were manipulated by finger stops and pedals, much the same as an ordinary organ. I should surely have noticed this unique instrument upon my entrance, had it not been for those colored reflectors which cut off the light.

"What does your Royal Axilla call that?" I asked, looking at the labels on the bottles.

"That," quoth he, "is my smelling piano. Did it never occur to you that civilized man has been cultivating his ear with musical sounds ever since

he was in the stage of savagery, while he has utterly neglected that much more sensitive member, the nose?"

This subject seemed to rouse great animation in His Majesty, and he spoke about it with much fluency, as follows:

"Take for instance the fact that one never forgets an odor," he continued, "while a musical sound is scarcely remembered over night. It is a matter of common observation that an odor will recall the scenes or incidents or persons with which it was first perceived. Indeed my chief chemist, whom I have had at my court several decades, is of the belief that the memory of a smell, be it pleasant or disagreeable, is the last thing that the mind retains. I have him compress into those bottles the essences of the principal odors. There now, you have the idea of this invention in a nutshell."

"And can you compose upon this smelling piano?" I asked.

"Why, certainly," he replied; "there is as much a symphony of smells as of sounds; and the harmony of odors depends in like manner upon discords. As, for example, in a sonata that I was producing last night, the delicate fragrance of mignonette and of lilies of the valley was offset by an odor of Edam cheese."

It was with difficulty that I maintained the composure of my countenance, but His Royal Armpit was in earnest, and I dared not laugh.

"Then you have scales for the smells?"

"Exactly," continued His Majesty, glowing with satisfaction at my appreciation of the subject, "there are minor odors, such as the essences of beeswax, of tan-bark, of most kinds of flowers and the various mixtures of tobacco, and so forth; and then there are major odors in which are included the rank smell of the poppy and of the milk-weed, of the sap of the pungent ailanthus tree, and of most of the concentrated acids, and what-not, and especially those odors of a high pitch, such as of molten soap and burning rubber. And this last bottle," said he sharply, and at the same time giving vent to an unconcealed yawn, "this last bottle I open whenever visitors overstay their welcome." Whereupon he pulled out one of the finger stops and pushed the base pedal. Instantly the chamber was filled with the vile stench of burning gutta-percha. At this strong hint I bade the Excelsior adieu, thanking him for his cordial reception of me, and then I repeated the custom of baring my arms before leaving his presence.

A moment later Sandy came running into my

room crying, "Lor' maarstar, the house am on fire!"

This information startled me, though I doubted its truth. "No, Sandy," said I, "it is only the smell of burning rubber." And upon making an investigation, Sandy discovered that I had for some inexplicable reason thrown my fountain pen into the fire. Probably in an absent-minded moment I mistook it for my half-burned segar. Such was the cause of the stench. Sandy reports that it is four o'clock in the morning. My lamp is just flickering. Perhaps I shall now be able to get a little sleep.

VI

My window is open, though it is a night in the late autumn. I have sat sipping this beverage until my brain is aroused to false action. Listen! There comes a band of music, marching. It is coming nearer and nearer until I can hear the human shouts of applause. I can see the crowd swaying and forging up the street past my window. I can see that they are escorting a chief to a rostrum where they may proclaim him leader! How grand and humble must he feel, knowing their expectations and his limitations.

Hear the fighting, onward notes of that music! It seems to say for him:

"Come on, my followers! I have won. I have triumphed! At last I have come into my own. Life is not a failure! My forehead beats with the inspiration of fame, of music, of triumphal progress. The bells are ringing for me, and every clash of their tongues sends a quiver through my blood. The whistles shriek! Each blast makes the hair on my head tingle. And the shouts: "Huzzah! Huzzah! Tiger! Three cheers for Me! And three times three! Huzzah! Huzzah!"

The band, the crowd and the leader have passed my window, and the music has died away. I sit

looking up into the star-lighted heavens, sipping my sangaree.

I wonder how many of the followers of that exalted man had longed to hear the music sound what it was sounding for him? Or was it? Ah, the dream of fame that was, but never is, pewter for silver. I see the spirits of the things which were to be, hovering about the living facts of the things which are, I see them standing as shadow sentinels to us, the sullen puppets of fate.

That crowd begins to march before me.

"You there! what are you? A clerk? A neat, scribbling clerk, and in your hopeful youth, in the knee breeches of sturdy boyhood, you dreamed that you were to be an architect! An architect of what? You alone can tell us. Oh yes, I know you.

"Next! What art thou? A cringing politician, and from the height of your white temple, one might surmise that good blood flowed in your veins. What of you? Back at college, are you? I mean in your memory. Very good, do you remember a clear-eyed enthusiastic youth with ideals of civic purity, a young lawyer hearing the dictates of righteousness—where is he? Dead! And you stand in his place, stanching the wounds of conscience with the cobwebs of half-success. You had money. It was not the greed for money,

no, not that, but the easy greed of ambition. Cheap ambition! Has the band played for you? How, pray, does it sound? Tell us that? Ah yes, I know you.

"And you too, you lazy being with a sleek, well-fed smile upon your rosy lips, yes, yes, I know you well. You have shirked doing anything except to stroll along the Road of Least Resistance. You were born an inheritor of great wealth, were you not? You are the scion of a great money-getter who was at heart a voluptuary, and so you have never done what you have not wanted to do, eh? No, that is not strictly the truth, else why have you not done what you *really* wanted to do? Look back to that brilliant dawn of your manhood, when your soul bade you speak, and you had a decent ambition to tell your fellow beings the truth, that you were not to be envied, that it was not so! And you thought of a great poem of discontent, of half-lighted love—aha, I know you well. Do you ever hear the band?

"Here is another of your ilk, only he was poor, and had more excuse. See his fingers, smeared with ink. See his nervous eye, dodging us lest we read his secret. He has a little money now; he can buy food and raiment, yet even when he is physically most at ease, he is still uncomfortable.

He wrote what he did not want to write. He wrote what he did not believe. He had to please or starve, so he pleased. Ah, sir, I do not want to examine you, for you know yourself. I knew your twin brother once, years ago, he had genius, whereas you have talent. Why did he cut his throat?

"Who is that pompous one over there? Let him step forward. He looks the part of self-made success. He comes nigh to the World's Conception of Complete Rapture, only he speaks fairly bad grammar. He is the practical ideal of the present-day American, industrious, self-reliant, not embarrassed by his past, confident in his contempt for others—we almost hear the conquering music as he advances. But do we know him? Let him come closer. You struggled all your youth and manhood and middle life, did you not? He nods. You slaved for your children and for your children's children, to perpetuate your name above want and in respectability. Ah yes, I think I know you. Your children? They are not what you willed them to be. He hung his head. And sadder than that, you imagined that you outgrew the wife of your struggles. You may take your stand under the Banner of Success for Others; it is just ahead of the Banner of Success. The band plays a little

sweetly for you, but it does not thrill you. The zest is gone."

Charity, charity, I pray God for charity toward the Other's Self and toward myself. Charity!

For, sirs, I, too, have had Macbeth's vaulting ambition which o'erlept itself. I, too, have horsed the clouds with Kaiser Peer Gynt, and ridden under the stars. Ozymandias, king of kings, never looked upon grander works than those on my demense. And I have dropped from poetry into fact. I have sailed the sea and cried, "Fear not. You carry Caesar!"

Macbeth became a murderer; Peer Gynt something worse. Ozymandias has been forgotten; and we know not where Julius Caesar lies.

On such a night as this, the heavens seem aglow with brilliants. Stars, moons, planets, suns, worlds—how many of you are inhabited as ours is? Or do you reckon at all of such atoms as men and women? You have shone upon a mighty host of leaders and their followers. You shine indifferently upon our passing shows and remain to shine when we are gone, mocking our longest efforts. Ah, how does that Eternity of the Past outdo the little Eternity of the Future of which poor man has dreamed!

Tell us, Moon, did the mastodons shed their

heavy hair when the ice receded? And did the Aztecs have a written alphabet?

Was Helen of Troy sweet to look upon? Or was she bold and brazen?

Was Shakespeare a drunkard? And did he consider Marlowe a failure?

In that company of Greeks who came to Philip with the request: "Sir, we would see Jesus;"—did they think that Christ had Grecian blood in his veins, as his thought indicated?

When I die, will I get my sleep at last in the wide bed which holds us all? Failures and successes cut much the same figure under the great green sheet of that bed, don't they?

Sandy, the moon has set and will not answer me. You may go to sleep, Sandy. I am going out for an early morning walk and gather us some mushrooms before the sun strikes them.

VII

I am in a warm part of the world where the sun is always vertical. I should judge that I must be somewhere in the tropic of Capricorn. Magnificent forests stretch away from the spot where I am lying, but immediately before me is a grove of the wild date palm, while I myself am luxuriating in the midst of gigantic grasses. I seem to be overcome with deep drowsiness. Yet my mind is quick to such a degree that I am able to contemplate an endless panorama that is unwinding before me. My body is bare in the white sunlight, but my head is kept cool by the lush green shade of the date palm. Let me watch that figure in the panorama.

I observe that the figure is a male. He is seated at the trunk of a tree on the edge of the forest. I set my eyes steadily upon him and perceive that his jaw projects as it does in all brutes, his nose is rudimentary, his hide is covered with silken hairs, his face partially naked, and when he turns his back to me I can see that his buttocks are callous. He is devouring fruit; but he is of a prying, inquisitive nature and examines what he eats. His mate, overhead in the branches, is likewise eating, and feeding their

single offspring, but her meal is upon cocoanuts, which she throws at other of her kind who draw near to their tree.

When lo! of a sudden, I see the male figure try to raise himself off all fours. He appears to find it most difficult to stand erect for more than a moment, for his head is thrown forward, and he stands awkwardly upon the sides of his two rear feet. He keeps trying, trying, and each time that I see him erect himself, he takes a look afar off, and gradually from these attempts, lo and behold! his forehead rises slowly, his jaw is receding, his eye develops, he can see his enemy at a distance!

Who is this enemy? I scan the outer skirts of the forest and perceive another male figure, fashioned like himself. Only this one approaches on all fours, whereas his upright brother has already seen him and is striving to prepare for his attack. I can see his front claws itch and quiver with indecision, when, ha! one claw spreads out from the others and the thumb is born! Now he is thinking. An idea is germinating!

His enemy is creeping slowly upon him, imagining himself unseen, little knowing of his disadvantage of being upon all fours. With a hideous yell he springs into view. But our upright brother is calmly chattering. He has used that thumb—he has grasped a club! The enemy

is awe-stricken at that erect figure, which drives him to cover and strikes him dead.

The mate in the tree screams with exultation, the offspring leaps to her bosom, and both descend to embrace their upright spouse and father in a perfect whirl of chattering. Inarticulate chattering, most unlike speech, but still chattering —for Love was born.

And those other enemies, those tremendous enemies, various and of a multitude of shapes, some as big as a mastodon—think of it!—he can see them away in the distance in season to escape. He pats himself with a sense of relief. He even kisses his wife.

Scenes shift before me; and there is a persistent blank in the panorama. This tapestry of the fated past, vast and unknown, winds and unwinds before me. Yet chaos on the screen is becoming more and more definite in outline. Yes, praise be given, there is the figure, the same upright figure, before me again. He is sitting on a rocky beach, bordering the bank of a gurgling river. His club is beside him. It is evidently late in the autumn, for the rock pile is covered with dried leaves. A little animal that he has killed with his club, is lying beside him. That off-member, the thumb, has grown strong on both hands, and he is grabbing the smaller

boulders with intense delight and clashing them together. What? A spark flew to the elemental tinder and the dead leaves are all ablaze. The figure became so frightened at this sight and so insane in his actions that he fell into the river. But by the time he scrambled ashore, the blaze had spent its force, and he noticed that where he shook himself, the water extinguished the fire. Gracious! What a relief to be without those biting colors once more. What *did* cause that trouble? He sits upon his haunches and ponders until his mind hurts. He is hungry. Where is the animal that he killed? He looks over at the rock pile with trepidation. Yes, there is the little carcass, but its fur is gone! He can hardly recognize it. He summons up courage and snatches it. But it hurts so that he lets it fall. He sucks his thumb in pain. The new smell! The new taste! Those biting colors made that rich odor and delicious flavor. How did he make them? He will make them again! He wants some more cooked meat.

Here the panorama ceased; and I fell inadvertently into a light sleep. I know not for how long I remained in slumber, but I was abruptly aroused by cries of "Fire! Fire!" That did not seem to me strange, as my room is directly opposite an engine house. I rushed to my windows. I could hear the telephone and the telegraph ring and click

in the engine house. Gong! Gong! The fire tower sounded. Gong! Gong! And there was the hitching up of the fire patrol.

I could not rid myself of the remembrance of the figure, and my mental eye kept looking about for him. Gong! Gong! There was the clatter of the horses' hoofs. Gong! Gong! The entire fire company sprang through its doors. Gong! Gong!

"There he is!" I cried to myself, tingling in every hair of my head, "there he is!"

It was the flash of the figure that I saw, driving horses breakneck, to save his fellow men.

VIII

This morning I am making a tour of inspection with the Great Axilla. We are driving in his chariot, which is a wide-seated, low-swung ox-cart drawn by a yoke of white oxen. The Excelsior has other means of faster locomotion, but he abhors those vehicles, while I am made nervous by the slow speed of our ox-cart.

"Why are you so fidgety, puny one?" asked the Excelsior, "evidently the inhabitants of your country get small enjoyment out of life, because they do not train themselves to observe. If one travels faster than an ox can walk, it is not possible for him to observe the indispensable details of this world. I am going through life for the last time, my little fellow, and I want to see all that there is. I am in no hurry."

We rode along in frisky pomp, and I tried to sit still.

"Who lives in that great mansion?" I asked, as we jaunted past the abode of some evidently wealthy citizen.

"His name was Missed-It."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, he died yesterday."

"What a strange name;" I mused.

"No, not if you knew him," said the Excelsior, "you know I never allow my great folk to have permanent names until they are dead. Then I name them. If you will go some other time to visit our cemetery you will see by the tombstones that several important personages have passed away this winter. You will see that I have had their names cut deep in the stones. For instance, 'Natural Poser' died in November; likewise 'Poor Imitation.' Then in December, we lost 'Anybody's Flirt,' and a little later 'Sublime Assurance' had to die. And now little old 'Missed-It' is to be tucked away. He was certainly very rich."

"How much did he leave?"

"He left everything."

The ox-cart slowly mounted a snow-covered hill, and I kept quiet. Presently my host said:

"There are no pockets to our shrouds; neither are there money drawers in our burial vaults; and that man's coffin could not hold a tithe of what he amassed."

"Why, how much was he worth?"

"Ninety billion buttons!" exclaimed the Excelsior, his eyes bulging in spite of himself.

"Buttons? Are buttons the coin of your realm?" I asked, smiling.

"You need not be so supercilious, my small

guest," snapped the Excelsior, "for I adopted our currency system from your own people."

"How is that?"

"I sent my agents to the warm ocean lands to search out what gave the majority of your people the greatest satisfaction. They made an exhaustive inquiry, and reported that most of you derived satisfaction from saying and having it said: He or she is worth so many million dollars, francs, pounds, rubles; and that the larger the number they could say the more glee they derived. Very well, if it be simply that the larger the sum the more the satisfaction, why not have a coin which can be multiplied indefinitely? Hence I decided upon buttons. Moreover, there is a moral attaching to our form of currency, for as buttons are used upon our clothes, and we can not use more than ten or a dozen upon one suit, and can only wear one suit at a time, a rich man is constantly reminded how superfluous are his other billions of buttons. Now, let us ride along for a while in peace."

The snow fell so fast that it balled upon the feet of our oxen, but as we ourselves were protected by a massive parasol, our view was unobstructed. Shortly we entered a thickly settled portion of the city where high structures towered toward the clouds. They resembled in architecture our great

office buildings. I could not maintain my silence any longer.

"Pray tell me what are all these high edifices jammed together here?"

"They are Sane Asylums," answered the Excelsior, "and the inmates are devotees of routine."

At that moment, whistles shrieked and bells rang: and lo, behold! vast throngs of individuals swarmed in the hallways and issued out of doors.

"Look at them," said the Excelsior, "they are now going to crawl to luncheon, no matter whether they are hungry or not. Yet you will find odd specimens in that mass. You will find presidents of companies who spend their lives poring over countless figures when they would much prefer to study along the inclinations of their temperaments. You will find lawyers and physicians who long to love and dream instead of listening to petty ills and complaints. You will find bankers who might have been philosophers. You will find clerks who conceal and are ashamed of poetic fancies. And yet they all slave on in their voluntary prisons, giving forth only mediocre efforts. And why? Because they do not love their work. They work only to procure buttons, instead of living for rational happiness. That is why this age of ours is unfortunately a Millennium of Minnows."

My host thought he had said enough for a while and ceased to entertain me. He lolled back and stroked his magnificent whiskers. Again we were jaunting down hill when the oxen drew up to water at a curved trough which stood before a crooked building with dingy, little windows, all arow.

"What on earth is this; who lives in here?"

"My cowards," answered the Excelsior, "did you not know that I own the rarest and most complete collection of cowards in the world?"

"I have never even heard of such a collection."

"What a puny ignoramus you are!" exclaimed the Great Axilla, "where can you have lived and not have been taught the underlying principles of cowardice? And I, sir, have specimens to illustrate each of those principles. Do you not even know the three grand divisions of cowards: the Physical Coward, the Moral Coward and the Intellectual Coward?"

"Have we not time to go in and see some of them?"

The Excelsior consulted his travelling dial, and said:

"It is almost time for my afternoon siesta, but if you will make haste and not interrupt me with your insipid questions, I can give you a quick tour of inspection."

We alighted and ran in through the low, grated portals.

"Here," said the Excelsior, as we entered the first tier of cells, "are the Physical Cowards. They are too ordinary and common to need explanation. They are divided into two main subdivisions. Firstly, the positive physical coward, who, having neither intellect nor morality on his side, resorts to force. And when he defeats you by the strength of his bull neck and coarse fists he declares that he has proved himself in the right.

"The second subdivision, which comprises those cells on the left-hand side, consists of the other and even more common variety. That is, a person who will not risk his body for the chance of protecting another, or who will not give up his cheap life for his country. A philosopher of your country once remarked, 'Tis man's perdition to be safe, when for the Truth, he ought to die!' "

The Excelsior took me by the arm and escorted me up a flight of winding stairs, until we reached a shaky, moving platform. The Axilla expatiated as follows:

"On this higher level in this second tier of cells, live my Moral Cowards. Their cowardice has to do with character. Here too, there are subdivisions. Firstly, those who prefer to be what

they are, and not what they might be. My friend, I speak with all due reverence: your Savior spoke of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and here I think is that sin's personification. For, the Unpardonable Sin, as I understand it, is not to struggle, not to strive to do right even though failure faces you at every turn, but instead to give up and become satiated with sloth, to yield to the worst elements in your nature and to grovel in their lowness. Bah! Do not start me talking about them, for it taints my own soul.

"The other and more open moral coward, and therefore the more simple, is he or she who takes out his or her anger, not upon himself or herself who is really to blame, but foists the blame upon another, as the wolf found pretext against the lamb. Then of course, there is also that vast class who openly attack one of their sex for having done what they themselves would inwardly like to do. This last variety has always struck me as being the most human of all.

"Come, now, to the third and highest level, where I maintain my Intellectual Cowards at a great expense. They are the very costly specimens, for they come chiefly from the places of elevated culture."

While he was speaking, we ascended a cast-iron stairway inlaid with arabesques. The Excelsior

let down a narrow, filigree draw-bridge which was the only means of access to the tier of intellectual cowards. We ambled across it, and the Excelsior made a sweep with his cane, exclaiming:

"Look at them! Are they not ludicrous? You have often heard the adjective contemptible applied to cowardice. The application came from this sect. These are the contemptible cowards. They lack the courage of their convictions. And the curious fact is that these persons are proud of their cowardice, because they call it another name—self-preservation, which includes self-appreciation."

Here the Excelsior turned upon me.

"Did it ever occur to you," he asked, "that a humbug is at heart a coward? A humbug is simply one who is afraid to be himself for fear it may not pay. As an example, one of the oldest and most harmful devices of the humbug is to titulate the imagination with smut under the pretense of being outspoken. That is why you see so many modern playwrights and novelists amongst them. If they were really clean-minded and earnest in their work, they would not have to adopt such false methods."

The Excelsior took me to the other end of the balcony where a ball was in progress.

"Here are some more humbugs," he began,

"indeed by far the majority of humbugs are found among the so-called fashionable classes. These specimens came from the esoteric 'sets' of your society folk."

"Do you allow them to carry on their same diversions?" I asked, noticing the luxurious furnishings and grandeur.

"Oh yes," answered the Excelsior, "otherwise they would languish and die. Look at that grand lady there in the gilt arm-chair. She is a famous leader. She has composure, but nothing to compose.

"Can you see that loose-jointed male specimen, stroking his blond mustache. How very haughty he is! He is exclusive, for fear of being excluded.

"These are all cowards, you understand, because they are imitated poses. Imitation is a confession that you lack the stamina to be yourself."

My brain was buzzing with the Excelsior's concentrated talk. He gave me some relief by asking me to follow him into a wing of the building. He unlocked a suite of private apartments. In the dining-room there sat five persons.

"Here," he whispered, "is a family of cowards, two parents and three children, a sister and two brothers. One of the brothers is a poet of some ability, but his family opposes him on the ground that it is not nice and proper to write such senti-

ments as he desires to give forth. Instead of lending a word of encouragement to his feeble will, as relatives are supposed to do, they show him their utmost contempt. And he does not realize that contempt from certain persons is a compliment. They are Pharisees of the purest type; and no more profound coward exists than a Pharisee, for he or she is invariably a conscious coward, shamming sincerity."

The Excelsior descended to the open air, and I gladly followed him; for the atmosphere was close and exotic within.

"Now I excuse you;" he said to me, yawning, "please do not visit me again for at least some months."

IX

I am on the Pacific seaboard, seated in an ocean breeze; the sun, falling delicately through a mist, makes me feel like a young god awaiting the daughters of men. It seems as though all nature would utter passionate yearnings upon this warm, buxom day. Yonder in clear view are the round, beautifully curved hills, rising gently from the soft smooth water, like breasts from a woman's form. And the firm, supple ship masts leap upward upon the waves.

"The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Where is my mate? I am ready for her, and she for me. And yet we are denied each other. By what right? By whose authority? There is evil thought in forbidding the pure, the naturally pure, to embrace.

In front of me, built up from the shifting beach, is a huge, stolid sea-wall, composed of a multitude of boulders, stuck together with crude, coarse cement. I have examined these boulders somewhat carefully with my eyes. They have each and every one of them been rolled and washed and moulded by the sea. And yet no two are alike. Some are beautifully shaped with radiant crystals

in their make-up. Some are jagged, rough-edged pyramids, uncut, with moss upon them. Many are flat rocks, worn by the beatings of countless aeons of waves until they are quite colorless. And then there is another kind which resembles these last and yet seem different. I refer to the plain, ordinary, flat, stupid stone, looking for all the world as if it had been created merely to be trodden upon. But the boulders that interest and amuse me most are those which are sheer bulks of matter or rather hulks of space, having their own way, always getting the place they want, boulders which are proud and satisfied with being exactly the sort of boulders that they are. I think that they like being big boulders chiefly because they catch the eye.

Can that coarse, man-made cement hold these elemental things together? Yes, for a while, but not forever. This sea-wall will have to be torn down and rebuilt again by coming nations; for that cement, Sandy, is civilization trying to weld men together; and that sea beating with the waves of beautiful, noble, animal passion, keeps ceaselessly, ceaselessly saying:

"Down! Come down, I say, you can not curb me, for I am life, and the Giver of Life, personified in motion, crucified in your sinful cement, come down; you have not yet builded rightly!"

Then empires and republics fall; then cities sink upon sunken cities; and the ant-hills lie waste upon an even desert. And man, poor, lonely, bewildered, impotent man begins again to mix cement.

Troy was destroyed because of a prostitute. And why? Because there should be no such person as a prostitute.

Sodom, Babylon and the Rome of the Caesars followed in the fated cycle of Troy—in the perversion of love. Paris, London, Berlin and New York will follow them, too. Nemesis takes time, plenty of time, too much time, yet follows as surely as the stars shine out of the sky. But the turtle doves of Solomon, without our vain intelligence, waste their little lives in love, or rather because of love, natural, untrammelled love, not one of them was wasted. Turtle doves do not sell their daughters in marriage for convenience, nor in harlotry for necessity. Marriage does not make love sacred. Love makes true marriage sacred. But what of marriage without love, or where love is killed?

Turtle doves do not mate after they cease to love. And so their love dies only with death, for they have no dogmas which call love a vice, no laws which call love illegitimate. Turtle doves have no prudery, for they are not foul-minded. Do

not accept the fallacy that they are silly, effeminate, cooing lovers. Quite the contrary, they are the most shapely, virile and dignified of all creatures, happy in the fulfillment of their being.

They have not the poor always with them, and so their males do not force the young females by starving them until they yield for money. Neither do they know of such base acts as rape, seduction and broken vows amongst them. Jesus Christ knew all this when he told us to have the heart right. Aye, but how can we have the heart right when superstition makes us believe that we do wrong. Here, then, is the key, and that old sinner, William Shakespeare, found it when he said that there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. We think love a sin, when it is as natural as breathing and as beautiful as the warm birth of sunrise.

Are these statements true or not true? I appeal not to the advocates of the so-called "free love." They are debauchees, too low for notice. I appeal not to religious ascetics, or bloodless beings. I appeal to normal, healthy, passionate men and women. Is it so, or is it not so?

Ah, you scientists, you theologians, cease seeking for what is hidden from us. Give up what is beyond us. Turn instead and tell us what of the

Geology of Passion? What of the Dogmas of the female's right to the male?

Come, Sandy, bring my tin spade and empty the little bucket upon the beach. I am going to try a new cement.

X

Once again I am in the company of my royal host, His Excelsior. The Great Axilla is showing me another section of his collection of men. We are in a vast inclosure which resembles a city park. Crossing it are shaded walks with benches at intervals, and at the intersection of these various paths, that is at the centre of the park, is a fountain. Upon the benches are seated men of different ages, some with chins almost beardless, others in the evening of life, with the harsh furrows of experience upon their features, and many who are worn into greyness.

"Look at these men," said His Excelsior, "examine them with care and tell me what you see."

I gazed about me with intentness, but remained silent.

"Can not you tell me what you see, slow one?" demanded the Excelsior, impatiently taking me by the elbow and turning me about face, "look at this specimen here—one with the down of youth still upon him."

"How hollow-eyed he looks!" I whispered.

"Aye, and his belly pinched."

"He looks up through the leafless branches as

though he were dreaming and yet awake;" I added.

"Aye," quoth the Great Axilla, "and his dreams never have and never shall come true."

"What is he?" I asked.

"He is a misfit;" was the reply.

Then we strolled slowly on until we reached the centre where the fountain was flowing drearily. As we came to a stop, the Excelsior squeezed my arm gently to attract my attention to a man of middle age who sat upon a bench immediately beside us. I turned to study him for a passing moment. His trousers were frayed at the bottom and soiled. His beard was muddy with a growth of several days. He was leaning on the arm at the end of the bench, holding in his fingers a twig with which he was drawing strange devices upon the gravel walk, while the shadows and the light of the sun played around him. There could be no mistake in his actions. He was trying to get time behind him, and above all to occupy his mind. He was striving to distract his thoughts from himself, a ceaseless endeavor. No, there could be no doubt about the meaning of that wayward, woe-begone look.

"Tell me, what is he?" I asked in a low voice.

"He is one of the unfits;" rejoined my host, meditatively.

I had to ponder a little, too.

By this time we were near enough to the fountain to hear the water falling, falling, with its never-ending splash; and from this point we could look up and down the different avenues that stretched away from us like the spokes of a gigantic wheel, of which we were the hub.

"And who are those up that avenue? And these here, who are they?"

"Those and these, all of them," quoth the Axilla, "the misfits and the unfits, they are the people who have nothing to do."

"I notice that most of them stop as they pass and drink at this fountain."

"Aye, verily," answered the Axilla, "for these are the waters of the Fountain of Endurance."

Before leaving this spot I did not fail to observe one among them who, by his countenance, clothing and deportment, seemed out of place. I noted that apparently he was doing exactly what I was doing, looking about and observing his fellow beings with scrutiny.

"What have you got him in here for?" I asked.

"Don't be so petulant, little visitor," answered the Great Axilla, "I have him here for the reason that he belongs here. He is one of the so-called dilettanti. He imagines that he is different from

the horde, because he sits by and watches them, calling himself a student of human nature. But mark me, he has the streak in common with the rest of them—he is tired of it all, for he, too, has nothing to do. Follow his gaze now, and you may again query whether that spectacle is germane to this exhibit."

I looked in the direction in which the dilettante was looking, toward the border of the park, and I saw a wide, white boulevard. Many people were driving and riding thereon, carrying whips with ribbons, or beautifully painted sun-shades. The vehicles themselves were splendid equipages, some were swung high, and some were swung low, according to the fancy and ease of the owners; and the coachmen and the footmen in their uniforms of sombre and brilliant hues made a showy spectacle to behold.

"I confess I can not see why they should be exhibited with these misfits and unfits."

"That is because your physical eye is not near enough to see them clearly, puny one," replied His Excelsior, "take you this strong field-glass," continued he, offering me the instrument, "and examine the faces of those you see upon horseback and in the various vehicles."

I looked first at the face of a woman, protected by a gaudy parasol. She was driving in an open

landau. Hers was the face of a woman far beyond maidenhood. There was something make-believe about her expression, as though in reality she was not free from care, as though her landau were neither carrying her to nor taking her from the realms of realized anticipations. Then I cast the glasses hastily upon a man on horse-back. He had the frame of one who was trying to recover a wasted constitution; but he had begun too late. A cigarette drooped languidly from his lips. He looked overfed with foods and wines that could no longer nourish him. Bah! I dropped the glasses from my eyes.

"Aha!" smiled the Excelsior, "now you perceive that they, too, have the same awful streak in their aspect."

"But, Great Axilla," cried I, "you surely allow them to drink also at the Fountain of Endurance?"

"Not so!" he exclaimed, "see their exclusive bowers which line the boulevard and into which they pass now and again? In those massive places they quench their thirst by sucking the juice from the acrid grapes of Ennui."

I pondered once more, but said nothing. The path we were treading led toward the edge of the park. We walked on, fist on fist, which is a sign of cordiality in the Excelsior's country. I had never known my host to be so familiar. Pres-

ently we came to a curve in our path, and there, hidden by a row of privet bushes was a long bench with arms at each seat for comfort. All of the occupants of this settee were women.

"I did not think that you had them in here, too;" I said sadly.

"Oh yes" said the Axilla, "that bench is reserved exclusively for them."

"Why is that?"

"Because it looks more comfortable than the others, but in reality it is hard and poses them in unnatural postures. How they paint and powder, and their cologne fairly makes me ill. I guess that you recognize them," concluded the Excelsior, eyeing me slyly, "they are the sort whom you meet seldom by day, and who abound late at night."

"Yes, I imagined as much; but, sire, I am again at a loss to account for their being exhibited here."

"You are not very bright, or else you sham stupidity," quoth the Great Axilla, "surely you know that a strumpet is both an unfit and a misfit—isn't she? She is a product of your civilization just as much as those poor men whom you saw sitting on the other side of this transformed, grass-growing ash heap."

I did not have a word to reply, and I hung my head in silence.

"But," said the Excelsior, "they enjoy a severe

privilege. They drink not only at the Fountain of Endurance, but are also allowed to suck the acrid grapes of Ennui."

As we passed out of the inclosure, my royal host turned to me and said:

"What think you is the motto that I have had placed over this exhibit of individuals who have nothing to do? Read—there it is."

He pointed to a sign, bearing these immense letters of gold:

IDLERS ARE NOT TO BE ENVIED.

"Now, my little visitor," quoth he, "you have wearied me sufficiently for the present. Perhaps you yourself may also enjoy a little sleep."

XI

I am seated in my room at a hotel in the city of New York. The proprietor told me that there is a large closet between my room and Sandy's which was reserved and locked by the former occupant of these rooms. I dislike privacy within my own privacy.

Sandy went out early in the evening to get the necessary ingredients for the making of his sangaree, as I told him that I should like to have a fresh quantity on hand. He returned about two hours since and made me about a gallon of the mixture. After I drank a glass, I told him that I felt better, and that he might go out to see the sights of this great city. Sandy is always reluctant to leave me alone. I am sorry now that I allowed him to go out, for I have a prescience that an unusual coma is about to fall upon me. But why worry about the unknown? Where death is, said a philosopher, we are not. And where we are, death is not.

I arose and thought that I ought to lie down in an attempt to sleep, when I thought that I heard a knock upon a door. Oddly enough, it was not upon my outer chamber door, but upon the closet door within. Surely I was mistaken.

I removed my dressing gown and stretched myself upon the bed. To convince myself, I arose and went to the inner closet door, but as I took hold of the handle, I stopped.

"What a superstitious wretch you are," I uttered unconsciously aloud to myself, "get to bed. For how could a human being be knocking at an inner closet door?"

With this I was consoled, yet I shuddered, and drank another glass of sangaree.

My God, the noise was repeated again!

I was in this awful predicament when a clearer knock at my outer door brought me to my senses. Although relieved at hearing a human sound, I was much embarrassed at my condition, as I had on an oriental costume which I wear for comfort when shut within my chambers. While I hesitated, another sharp knock came at the outer door, and in another second, I heard a scratch in the key-hole. Unfortunately I had not shot the bolt on the inside, so rather than have the intruder open the door for himself, I sprang forward and swung open the door. There stood a man. He was flurried and out of breath, but apparently a gentleman of culture. He carried a valise.

I was angry and beside myself with nervousness, and determined to be abrupt with him.

"Be good enough to pardon me for disturbing you," he said, "for I know how angry I would be if a similar interruption should occur to me. I shall only bother you for a moment. I was the last occupant of these rooms, and the proprietor of this hotel allowed me to reserve the large closet until such a time as I might be able to carry away its contents."

"Yes, so he told me," I answered, sharply, "but you come at a late hour to remove your effects and will arouse the other guests who may retire earlier than I am accustomed to do."

"To say the whole truth," he replied, "I did not come to remove my effects. I came to look upon your face. Now I am at my ease. I will leave without bothering you, and I shall remain away until you give up these apartments."

"What do you mean?" I asked, bluntly, as I thought the man insinuated that I would have pried into his effects if he had not seen me.

"I mean that I take you for a gentleman," he said, "a gentleman without the curiosity of Bluebeard's wives."

His frankness at once unarmed me and amused me.

"You are quite out of breath;" I remarked.

"Yes," he said, "I have walked up the seven flights of stairs."

"What, are not the elevators running?" I asked, worrying about Sandy's return.

"Oh, yes, but they make me dizzy. I—I—I rarely use them."

The man's hesitation shot a fiendish idea into my brain. There are two classes of men who interest me particularly, one type is composed of those who are taciturn about their mysterious selves, and the other kind who conceal mystery under a glib and suave exterior. My visitor being of the latter class, this fiendish intention came into my brain: suppose you dose him with your sangaree until he reveals his mystery, and you can read his naked soul. Besides this, the man had a fascinating face and figure. He was about fifty years of age, his hair streaked with grey, his eyes outwardly plausible but inwardly leering, his mouth told of an exceedingly sensuous nature. His features and his body stood out like a mask, covering an actual self within, totally different from his considerate, gentlemanly exterior. I want to scratch that thin veneer of civilization, and get a look at this urbane creature.

"I fear that you mistook my abruptness for rudeness," I said, "sit down, won't you? Rest a few minutes until you recover your breath. I fear you have no conception of how hard stair-climbing is on the heart."

"I have been used to it for years," he replied, about to depart, "for eighteen years I climbed the pyramids of Egypt."

"What a coincidence," I answered, "I myself am a student of the East. I even adopt their dress within doors, as you see. Did you ever work about the vicinity of Memphis? Come in and sit a moment, for you are in no condition to strain yourself any more for a while. My servant is out, or I would offer you refreshment."

I opened the door wide. He hesitated, but after brushing off a cloud of suspicion arising from my change of manner, he entered, set down his valise, and looked at me as I closed the door.

"When you spoke of Memphis," said he, "well, I can only say that I was taken aback! Memphis was the site of most of my work."

"You were surprised no more than I when you spoke of the pyramids," I replied, "pardon me, but will you excuse me if I take a glass of a mild beverage which I keep on hand? I would gladly offer you some, but I fear you would not care for it, and I am sorry that I have nothing else to give you, and that my servant is out."

"What is your beverage? I have tasted every liquor from vodka to white whiskey."

"Oh, mine is a very mild concoction. It is only sangaree."

"Sangaree? Why, I was raised on sangaree."

"I am glad that I can now be hospitable. Excuse me while I fill the caraffe."

I went into Sandy's room, drew a pitcher of his strong stock solution, and returned to find my visitor reading one of the books on my table.

"A most exhaustive work upon marriage," he said, running over its pages, "I finished it myself last spring. The Germans are the only thorough scholars we have, and this book by Westermark will remain a standard work."

These matter-of-course remarks of his did not interest me, so I made no reply, and merely filled two goblets with the sangaree, offering him one. He raised the glass to his lips like one accustomed to heavy draughts, emptied half of it, looked at the liquor, looked at me, looked at the liquor again, set it down, and said nothing. I refilled it before taking my seat. Thinking that I was not observing him, he scrutinized me again, once more looked at the liquor, saw me empty my glass, rubbed his nose, and then emptied his again. For a time, we sat in silence.

"Do you want to know what Westermark taught me, though he contradicts it himself?"

I nodded, looking him full in the eyes.

"I came to the conclusion that the Almighty

had married a monogamous woman to a polygamous man."

As he set down his glass, I knew that the liquor was beginning to work. I felt like another Ethan Brand.

"There's rum in your sangaree;" he said, compressing his lips.

"Yes, to give it flavor with the cherry bounce—don't you like it?"

"Very much indeed. It's difficult to procure real Medford rum these days."

"Let me fill your glass."

"Really, I have had sufficient; thank you."

I filled his glass again.

"Plenty, plenty, thank you!" he insisted, as the liquor reached the brim of the glass.

"But the trouble with Westermark and the other scientific observers," I began, "is that they give you second-hand knowledge of men and women, theirs is mostly book knowledge. I always feel that I am reading works upon heated blood written by cold, dried-up, bloodless professors, who lack the first-hand experience of one's own life."

"I am a professor myself;" said he.

"I beg your pardon, but I mean—"

"Tush—tush!" said he, "you are entirely right. I had to resign my professorship be-

cause of a woman. I say, this is a mighty good drink."

He took the pitcher and refilled his own glass.

"My dear sir," said he, unbending and stretching his legs, "I like you, for sometimes we can say things to a stranger which we would not dare breathe to a life-long friend. Fourteen years ago I was a professor at a Theological Seminary; I was a lover of beauty, a devout searcher for truth, as natural and free as I am with you now. (Here he lighted one of my cigars.) One twilight in April, the Chairman of the Faculty came to my room, told me that I was the subject of gossip, that my words shocked the New Englanders, and that I must be more circumspect in my conduct. His words wounded my frank nature. I went to Boston and got intoxicated, and sent the Faculty this telegram, saying, "Good-bye, my colleagues. Your world is not my world. Yours is a world of sham learning, hypocritical inconsistency between your reason and your emotions. Good-bye." Naturally, it was an indiscreet thing to do; but you can wager that they never published that telegram."

"I should think not;" I said, smiling.

He knocked the ashes off his cigar and continued:

"Seriously, my friend, it is this theological tinkering that has caused most of the trouble in this world. Long ago when the world was young, men wanted to do certain things; so they invented gods and told their people that it was the gods, not themselves, who wanted these things done. Then began the tinkering with what was beyond man's sphere. Then man began to tinker with elements over which he had no control, with elements which he was never meant to comprehend. He segregated men and women apart, and made the distance between them contrary to natural laws. Instead of allowing Nature to run her beautiful course, he set up laws out of his own little brain. In order to protect himself as a selfish egoist, in order to gain power over his fellow men, in order to be able to own any woman whom he might desire under the guise of divine right, he had the assurance to say that these laws were God-given, and that therefore his wilful possession of a woman was a sacrament! That is what I mean by his tinkering, mental juggling with elemental truths which he did not understand and had no right to touch. It was his conceit. His sophistry for physical perversion. Do you know what 'God-given' means? I don't. And I have been trying to find out for twenty years. And woman, like the silly she has always been, said it

was grand, and acquiesced; while all other animals have, without man's arrogance, remained true to their elemental nature, and so are spared our trials and shortcomings. I am right, I am right, I know I am right! That is why civilization is a failure, caused by man's tinkering with the fundamental, basic operations of the ordinary course of the perpetuation of the species."

When the strange professor finished speaking, I confess that I was at a loss for words, and asked:

"Do you really believe that civilization is a failure?"

"My dear sir, look about you. Side by side with material progress, with perfected inventions and conquest of disease, how much have our morals improved? How much have our vanities diminished? Do men and women grow more and more faithful to that sacrament? Do our cities grow more and more pure, and free from the taint of perversion? With our much-vaunted inheritance of art and culture, what has become of the freedom of the will, which was said to be the supreme good in that inheritance?"

"Well," I said, "you are not saying anything new; we all know that! What are you going to do about it? You Ibsens are wonderful diagnosticians, but what we want is a cure!"

"That is only a quibble, if indeed it is not non-

sense," answered the strange professor, "for then you admit that we have not freedom of the will, that there is no such thing; well, my friend, I heartily agree with you. It is not a question of free will with us, it is a question of strength of will and weakness of will, which is purely a matter of fate."

"Surely you are not a fatalist!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, sir, every inch a fatalist. You doubt my faith in my convictions, I see? Would you like me to prove them to you by supernatural means?"

Here the man leered at me with defiance, and I grew uneasy and longed for Sandy's return.

"Proceed if you wish;" I said, folding my arms.

"My dear sir," he began, rising and holding out his hand for me to clasp, "can I trust you? If you do not wish to believe me, may I prove my position to you by a discovery for which I searched a lifetime, an invention on which I lavished the slavery of years, an invention whose workings may warp your credulity until you doubt my sanity and your own. Can I trust you with my secret? I have the instrument in that valise. That is why I have walked up the seven flights of stairs, because the elevator's motion would upset its delicate mechanism. Can I trust you?"

"Proceed if you wish;" I said, without taking his hand, for there was something uncanny about the man in his present state.

"Listen to me. I may be a trifle long, but if you knew how I am enjoying myself, yes, how I am relieving my brain by detaining you! I say relieving my brain, for it is about pent-up brains that I am about to speak. Have you ever thought that when each one of us dies, how many facts, memories, griefs, joys, are enclosed in the folds of our brain? How our skull is literally the storehouse of all we knew, felt and experienced. That in there, it was; and that in there, it must be? I have spent hours roaming through museums in which mummies were exposed; I have spent still more hours passing through cemeteries where the countless dead, known and unknown, lie. What if their skulls could be tapped? I asked myself, would we not find a few ideas, perhaps, which had filtered to the bone and survived alone of all the mind that was?

"My dear sir, you know what we have done with electricity? Thirty years ago, the first time I heard over the telephone, it sounded like a voice from the other world, and many believed that it was, until we got so we could recognize the individual voice. On that line of the vibratory properties of matter, I have worked. If we can

vibrate with the dead, they will reply. I followed the example of that famous musician who said he would fiddle down a bridge. And he did. I, in turn, sought to fiddle down that invisible bridge over which we must all walk with astral steps. And, sir, my efforts have been rewarded."

That instant he ceased speaking, and there came the same gentle knock at my inner closet door.

"There he is now!" uttered the strange professor.

"Who?" I asked, breathlessly.

"My mummy! My mummy! You shall hear him orate. Has he tapped before I came this evening?"

I was paralyzed with fear, believing that I was in the presence of a spiritualistic maniac. But I maintained my composure as the surest means of safeguard, and held my tongue.

The strange professor took from his pocket a bunch of keys, unlocked his valise, produced an instrument not unlike the phonograph, attached a long rubber tube to it, the tube having two metal balls at the other end; these balls he carried to the closet door, unlocked it and drew out the case of an Egyptian mummy! The professor turned off the lights. What he did, I know not. I heard him start his machine. I heard him rummage in

the closet and say, "Here is your suit of modern clothes!"

After long trying moments for me, he turned on the lights, and a man with a yellow complexion sat between us; and the mummy case was empty. I swear it upon my oath.

"Tell the gentleman who you are," demanded the strange professor, "make for him your oration, as you did for me. Are you able to stand alone now?"

The man arose and said:

"I belong to the Undying Ones. I am the Thracian, named Zalmoxis, of whom Herodotus tells. I could not endure the civilization of my time, and had a subterranean hall built in which to reside. The people of my day believed that I never died. But I did die, though I contracted with an Egyptian priest to embalm and mummify me. And here is my secret. I took with me the power to return at the end of certain cycles of years to the land of the living. How I came by that power, I reveal to no man, neither do I reveal the term of my cycles, lest the living plot against me. Besides this, I learned the art wherewith to speak the language of whatever land or age in which I may arise. The last I spoke was Arabic. At another time I was a contemporary of Cartaphilus, the Usher of the Divan in Jerusalem.

He was Pilate's door-keeper at the time of Christ's trial. I myself saw him strike Jesus on the neck when the young men were leading Him from the hall of judgment. I hear that this Jew who smote Jesus has also lived since.

"Ah, if you could believe that with these eyes of mine, I have seen the ancient caliphs of Babylon; that with these legs I have traveled the empire of the Saracens; that with these arms, I fought throughout the wars in the Holy Land. I was a compatriot of the bravest man who ever walked the earth, Godfrey de Bouillon."

"Tell us," said the strange professor, cutting him short, "in your various revisits to this land of the living, what impresses you the most?"

"I look back with surprise and wonder at the intricate systems of the theology of the ancient Greek and Roman, and can scarcely credit the credulity which could receive them as truths and cherish them with reverence from age to age. I marvel at my own faith in them. Yet the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Resurrection, no whit less dark and intricate, and requiring nothing less of credulity, I see you receive with religious reverence, and respect as revelations of Deity.

"Indeed, when I consider the faith which is requisite for your own religion, and without which you are destitute of any religion, it should teach

you to look with respect at least upon the passionate but noble gods of Rome, at the artful but polished deities of Greece.

"Even the gods are not immortal! And these are a great and forgotten race. The calm, majestic Neptune, who soothed the mighty ocean with his trident, has sunk beneath its waves to rise no more forever. The roar of cannon has frightened Mars from out the world. Alas for sighing youth, that laughter-loving, blushing Venus lives only in the skies. A dark shade hangs over Pluto; and the entrance to the realms of Tartarus has been withdrawn from mortal ken. High in heaven, another deity now sits upon the seat of dethroned Jove; and the book of fate, new-bound and new-entitled 'Providence' is yet preserved, though the three sisters no longer guard its sacred records.

"Thus with curiosity unmixed with reverence, I recall the names of the departed gods whom I once worshipped, and sometimes with a confidence mingled with a doubt, I wonder lest such should be the fate of your own religion."

At this point, the man's knees trembled, and the strange professor motioned him to be seated, as he seemed about to collapse. The whole spectacle was too much for me; and I sprang out of my chair.

"Come, we must go out in the open air," I suggested, "the heat of this room is oppressive."

"Nothing would suit us better," said the strange professor, "it will do my friend good, and afford him an opportunity to see our great metropolis." Upon this, I began at once to change my costume.

"To what nationality does he claim to belong?" I asked.

"I am an Egyptian," spoke up the man, "I was born a Thracian, but I moved to Egypt. I lived at Memphis, a superb city which has long since passed into complete oblivion. I often think that not one of us as we used to walk its streets could ever have believed such utter desolation possible. Away in the distance only the pyramids of our Pharaohs stand. When I saw them last, I could hardly recognize them."

"Why did you go to Memphis when you were alive?" asked the strange professor.

"On account of a common concubine. I had to be a foolish young man."

By this time, we had reached the elevators, and the professor said that he would have to walk down, as he took with him the valise which contained the mechanism too sensitive to be taken upon an elevator. Whereupon, I insisted upon the three of us walking down, for I did not wish to be left alone with the Egyptian.

When at last we reached the street, I offered to take them to the opera, though I confessed that it would be nearly over. I hoped that even a few strains of music might soothe my troubled brain. I purchased three tickets, and we mingled with the magnificent assemblage in the foyer. After looking about him, the Egyptian suddenly stood aghast.

"Is that the best your women can do?" asked the Egyptian, turning first to me and then to the professor.

"What is the matter with them?" we asked together.

"After all these centuries, is the best they can do, the wearing of trinkets on their ears, bangles on their arms, and their fingers stiff with rings? Why, the barbaric brain of the early Egyptian perfected every known design of jewelry. Is woman at heart still a savage? And these absurd head-dresses! And that dirty powder on their faces! Have you not gotten beyond even that common sort of vanity?"

"I am afraid that your friend will not enjoy it here," I said, fearing a scene, "let us leave."

As it was now late in the evening, I took them to a famous French café. We had hardly seated ourselves at a table, when the place filled with people who came from the closing of the theatres.

Soon the corks popped from the bottles, soon the men became noisy and drowned the music, and soon the painted women became vulgar.

"Is this the best your men can do?" asked the Egyptian, looking about him, as though a pall of ennui had fallen upon him, "after all these generations since I was foolish, is man's chief diversion that of getting drunk with low women? I used to do this with the strumpets of Babylon; and those chartered courtesans were at least naturally beautiful."

"You had better go back to your mummy case," said the professor, "we have nothing more to offer you. Here is your sleeping powder."

The Egyptian took the powder and willingly made his escape. The professor looked at me, and I looked at the professor. I fear that I was rather sheep-faced and ashamed of the only civilization we had to offer. The professor saw my chagrin, and that he had scored in favor of his doctrines.

"I have just one more experiment to prove to you the scope of my invention," said he, "and then I shall bid you good-night."

He took me by the arm, and with the other hand he carried his valise. He led me into the downtown districts, along the great thoroughfare which is so crowded by day and so deserted by night.

We came to the gates of an old cemetery, and after looking up and down the street to make sure that the police did not observe us, the strange professor ushered me into the cemetery, and we sat down upon a cold marble slab, and once more in the hush and chill of quiet moonlight, the man became uncanny.

"I know what you think," said he, "you think that I have this power over only that one man. You even suspect me. You fear lest I have you in a state of hypnosis or morbid sleep, and that even the Egyptian himself was an illusion. I know you. You tried to get me intoxicated with your sangaree. I admit that you have a power of extracting confidences. You thought that perhaps you had found in me some interesting phantast who would amuse you. But let me tell you the most profound paradox in the world: if you possess a power, and abuse your power, that power will be taken away from you. Take care!

"Now for my last experiment. Answer me, if you can not believe your eyes, can you trust your ears? Listen to the sentiments which have outlasted the brains of a few of the dead. Often these ideas crystallize their whole experience."

He undid his valise, placed two hard rubber tubes in my ears, and then slowly inserted the two metal balls into the head of a grave. I saw his

spider-like fingers reach out and touch the valise, and the machine started.

"Hold the tubes tightly in your ears!

Presently a gurgling vibration ceased and these words came distinctly:

"I should like to see the sun shining, and my sheep nibbling the green, tender grass. I was happy."

Then the vibration stopped. The professor seemed to know it, probably from the relaxed intentness of my expression. He said not a word, but motioned me to follow him. We moved to another grave where he repeated the operations. Then came these words to my ears:

"Too late, too late; everything came for me too late. They even tried to cure me too late. Alas, poor Dorothy!"

The next grave gave forth these words:

"I believed in God and said my prayers. That was my only solace."

We moved again to a mound covered with fresh earth and new flowers. The professor whispered that the lately dead often had confused ideas. This was the message:

"Last night was my first night in the grave. I trusted my lover. His faithlessness turned me into a bad woman. I weighed only ninety-two pounds when I died. I wish that I could drink

and dance with him once more. I wish I could see his eyes beam on me. I do love him."

The words ceased to come and the vibration stopped.

The professor whispered that he would go to three more graves and then depart.

The first gave out only one sentence:

"I married a man whom I did not love, yet I kept him from knowing the truth."

And the second:

"My eight children which I bore my husband gave me much joy and some sorrow. I was so proud of my son, Charlie."

And the last:

"I was known as the rich spinster of the place where I lived. Ah, they little knew that money does not, can not, make one happy. Why had I to be sterile?"

To my dying day, I shall hear that plaintive, unselfish question. And when they tap my skull, the answer will be graven there.

The strange professor put the metal balls and the tubes back in their place, and closed the valise. We issued forth again upon the sidewalk.

"Why was it that only women spoke?" I asked.

"Because most women die keeping the true secrets of their existence; whereas few men can maintain a life-long self within a self. Men are

more vain, but they have less pride than women. Goodnight! Good-bye!"

Without another word the strange professor took a passing street car and left me stark alone. And I walked for hours before I cared, or rather dared, to go to my hotel. Daylight was coming through the windows when at last I reached my rooms. The mummy case was gone! The closet door was open, and the closet empty! I went into Sandy's room, and there he sat awaiting me.

"Lor', maarstar, you done do me wrong. I jest come home, after tryin' to spy on you. I sees you once with two gen'lemen."

"What? Were there three of us, Sandy?"

"Yes, maarstar, you know one of them was yaller. He never did look like he come from this country."

"Do you swear it, Sandy?" I asked, placing my hand on his shoulder.

"I sirtainly do, maarstar;" said he, looking up at me as if I were bereft of my reason.

"Thank heaven!" I uttered aloud, "I almost thought that I might be going mad. We must leave this city, Sandy, for while I am here, I keep thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking of the days I spent here once as a boy. Oh, Sandy, that morning in May when I awoke to find that it

was true! Too true! You remember, the following February Miss Susanne died?—Let us pack the trunks."

XII

When I was a child of four, long, long ago, as it seems to me, some friend gave my father a setter dog. And my father named him "Tim," for the giver's name was Timothy.

Tim and our old gardener, Sandy's father, whose name was Uncle Robert, were about the only friends of my early childhood. I remember how in the fall of every year, when the chestnut burrs used to get big and the pippins began to ripen, Uncle Robert used to dig up all the potatoes and make them into a huge mound at the end of our garden. Then he would rake together in heaps the dead and falling leaves, and use them for a warm covering for the potato mound in order to protect the potatoes from the snow and frost, for he kept them there all winter, and only brought them up to the kitchen as the cook needed them. Uncle Robert's mountain of potatoes always impressed me as being perfectly wonderful. Indeed most everything that Uncle Robert did, came pretty near to the marvelous. Upon the first fall of snow, I used to get a staff, and scale that mountain, and pose on the summit "like stout Cortez—

silent, upon a peak in Darien." I have crossed the Rockies and the Alps since, but not one of them has seemed quite so high or inspiring. Sometimes I think that when a child loses that appreciative sense of the marvelous, the joy of life dies. Mounds become mere mounds, and mountains only mountains.

But the real fun at potato time, was after Uncle Robert had used up as many leaves as he could, and set the rest on fire. No one could ever light a fire quite as well as Uncle Robert. No matter how the wind blew, no matter how much the leaves jumped up in his old face, Uncle Robert caught them and turned them into shoots of flame. That was toward the end of the chilly days when the clouds used to grow black even before the chickens went to roost. And now came the real treat. Uncle Robert would give me two potatoes from within the mound. Then he would poke a hole in the hot, red ashes; I would drop them in; and he would smoulder them with fresh leaves. Hereupon, Uncle Robert would leave to feed the turkeys.

Meanwhile Tim, my setter, sat upon his haunches, watching us, his tongue hanging out, for the fire made him hot. I used to make an extra fuss about all this potato roasting in order that Tim might enjoy it the more. And as soon as I had

dropped the potatoes in the ashes, I would go and lie lengthwise on Tim's back, and fling my arms about his neck and hug him tight. I could go and see the turkeys driven to roost any evening, but this evening was peculiarly Tim's and mine. I knew that Tim loved me, but not half so much as I loved Tim. I bumped his head, which was my most intimate term of affection with him. We two alone would sit there until the potatoes were cooked, watching the flames change into smoke, and the grey smoke rise and join the greyness of the winter sky. I was happy, so happy, dreaming with my arms about Tim, both of us gazing into the burning leaves, and, oh, their delicious odor, we both relished it, and I, full of affection and boyish glory, thinking strange, innocent thoughts. What would I not give to be that little brown-headed boy again, unfettered with the knowledge of evil?

When the potatoes were cooked to a mealy white, Uncle Robert came back from the turkey-house and pulled them out with his dextrous rake; and we three proceeded to the kitchen, where we found Aunt Maria, Sandy's mother, sitting by the old brick oven. She gave us salt, and we ate the potatoes. Tim had some. No fairies ever dined like that, I was sure. Then my mother came out on the back veranda, and called:

"My son, my son, come into the house!"

"Doan't you heah Mistus callin'?" demanded Uncle Robert.

"Yes," I said, "but I didn't want to go."

I went. And I never came back.

That night tragedy was to begin in my life. When we were asleep, my father, mother and I, the son of our overseer trespassed across our lawn. Tim was on watch. No one ever knew exactly what happened; but Tim went at him, tore his pantaloons and bit him in the thigh. It was my certain belief that the boy had stoned Tim, for I found stones in the yard the next morning. And Uncle Robert intimated that Tim had guarded the turkey-house. But excuses were of no avail. Early in the day, the overseer brought the boy and his pantaloons and exhibited them to my father and was loud in his complaints. The brazen, whining boy was really proud of his wound. I do not know what my father said to them, for he took them into his office down by the grape-arbor; but that afternoon Tim was tied with a long trace to the big poplar tree. And I heard my father say that Tim must surely die. Die? What did that mean? Tim die? Dead! My father, a man, have the right to take my Tim's life? No, no, that could not be. God would not stand for that. My mother had taught

me to pray every night, and now in a quick impulse I rushed alone to the garret, secreted myself in a cuddy, knelt by an old black trunk, and prayed and wept; and I felt that God heard me and that my Tim was safe. Oh, what a relief! Then I went to the poplar tree. Tim looked into my eyes. He knew something was wrong. He gave me his paw. And I bumped his head. I whispered that he was safe; that I had prayed for him. I thought and still think that Tim's eyes watered. We sat there under the poplar tree and watched the yellow leaves fall.

Presently I saw my father appear on the front porch. He had his shotgun under his arm, and came toward us. Child that I was, I thought he was going hunting and had come to get Tim. But when I saw him untie the trace and start to lead Tim, I understood. I screamed, I caught his trouser leg, I wept; he shook me off and had me taken into the house, screaming and kicking and yelling. Oh, I think those were the keenest pangs which I have ever endured. They put me on my play-counter, and offered me toys! I hoodwinked them. I behaved; and in a few minutes they let me go.

I stole up to my cuddy in the garret.

I knelt again by the old black trunk. They had gone back on Tim and therefore on me.

But God would not go back on us. I wept and said every prayer that my mother had taught me. And I said this one of my own:

"Lord, save Tim. Don't let pop make him die."

Boom! the report of a gun rang across the woods. I shuddered. Had God, too, gone back on me? If so, why?

I went to the attic window and waited breathlessly. I stretched myself flat on the dusty floor, so that I could see and not be seen. After a little while I saw my father climb over the zig-zag fence, carrying the trace over his shoulders.

In the evening they found me stained with dusty tears, asleep on the attic floor. My mother kissed me and petted me and told me that I was her king. It did no good, for she had taught me futile prayers. She put me to bed, but I would not pray. I sobbed while she said the hollow words for me. Then I heard her tell my father that she feared that I was going to be ill.

"Pooh!" said my father, "a child's sorrows are like a child's joys, they soon pass away."

He had a way of checking off the events of life with some false axiom. And soon they thought I was asleep; and I heard him tell my mother how he had taken the trace off the dog after they reached the woods, how Tim had followed him to the great boulder down in the hollow, how

Tim had wagged his tail when he told him to look for squirrels in the trees, and then when Tim looked up for the game, he shot him behind the ear, and the dog rolled over in the cave under the boulder.

That was the first night of my life when I did not close my eyes.

Our old house had a large spare room for guests, but what I remember about it is, that my mother used to take me in there every morning when the windows caught the sun. She would draw me up in her lap and read poetry to me. Naturally, I did not understand much of it, but that made no difference, I loved it just the same; for it made my mother, who was not a pretty woman, very beautiful to me. She was an impulsive woman, hugging me one moment, and boxing my ears the next. But those hours in the sunshine when she used to read aloud to me in the spare room, they were sacred. There was nothing then except deep affection.

When she was a girl, I have heard my father say in after years, my mother was as care-free as a meadow-lark. He used to tell me how at house-parties where they did their courting, she would keep all the company in gay spirits and laughter.

They married; and a baby girl was born to them. She was my little sister, Louise. She grew to be four years old and was a remarkable child, a bundle of natural mirth and strong individuality. Then she took black diphtheria, and died.

My mother withdrew into herself, she became sad and more sad as time went on; and during this sorrow, she conceived and bore me. Is it any wonder that I, a man, should at times weep like a girl?

Now I am back to where I left off about Tim's death. It was after he was gone that my mother used to take me daily into the spare room and console me with poetry. Then one day the blinds were drawn close in my mother's room. She had another of her terrible heart attacks. O God, how I have seen her suffer! She seemed to get much better, indeed quite well, and I grew happy again, and I can see myself climb out of my crib and scramble into bed between her and my father. And she said jokingly to my father:

"If I should die, who will be your wife?"

"I'll be pop's schwife!" I exclaimed, as a matter of course, and I can hear their hearty laughter to this day; and my mother drew me over on her and covered me with kisses; and I remember that my father remarked something about my being "a precocious curiosity." He had a bad habit of

speaking about me before my face, never crediting that I would cherish his mysterious remarks until I understood them. Mark me, all children do this.

Autumn went by; and winter came. We had an unusually heavy fall of snow for Virginia. Only a redbird and some occasional sparrows could be seen in the leafless poplar. I remember it was the week before Christmas, because I received my sled in advance so that I would go down to the duck pond and not disturb my mother, who was very sick again. That night I was kept down in the kitchen with Uncle Robert and Aunt Maria. Sandy has told me that he was there too. We were all huddled about the brick oven; and my childish intuition perceived a hush over the old servants. Of a sudden, we heard way off down the plantation road the jingle, jingle of bells, coming nearer and nearer.

"It am the sleigh comin' with those town doctors;" said Uncle Robert, and he went out to meet it with his lantern. Even Aunt Maria, who was usually the bulwark of our household, was uneasy and troubled.

"I doan't lak to see them touch my young Mistus!" she said, defiantly, as she held my hand.

Jingle! jingle! the sleigh was at the door! I broke away from her and rushed out in the snow

to see the doctors who had come from Richmond. I remember how my childish imagination was roused by the sight of three men in soft hats and storm coats, carrying small valises, as they hastened up the porch steps to where my father stood, holding a lamp aloft to light their way. Aunt Maria came and caught me and whisked me off to bed. That was all that I knew until the next morning when I was awakened by a strange white nurse, who had been with us a few days. She said that my father had sent for me "to come and kiss my mamma good-bye."

I went with her without realizing what I was doing. I heard one of the doctors say that he had seen my mother's father die of the same kind of heart failure. Die? There was that word again. My mother die? No, no, that could not be. I ran out of the room without their knowing that my child's faith in God, which she had tried to restore in me, was now actually restored. I climbed again to the garret and knelt by the black trunk and held up my little hands in prayer. This time I did not cry. I made up my mind that I must be brave on my father's account, for when I left the sick-room, I saw that his hands covered his face; and he spoke not a word; and I went and took down his hands, and when he looked at me, I saw his eyes film with tears.

Oh, dear, I do not want to tell the rest. I have heard others say that the sight of my father, holding my hand, as we stood beside my mother's snow-bordered grave, was as bleak a scene as they ever cared to witness, that we both looked so utterly forlorn, and that I looked as though I tried to take my mother's place.

I know that I wanted to do so. I know that where he went, I went; where he slept, I slept. We went North for a while. We came back in the spring when the fields were being plowed.

My little sister, Louise, was four years old when she died, before I was born. I was four years old when my mother died. How often have I envied little Louise, for at that age I reached the culmination of my happiness. In all this world there is one truth: a motherless son is a friendless child.

As I grew up, my father and I became more and more companionable, though we were totally different. Up to a certain point, my father was one of the most lovable of men, generous, unpretentious, true to the memory of my mother. He had a unique faith in mankind. He assumed that because he liked a man, that man was honest in all respects. Naturally, he was imposed upon, because he could not separate his affections from his observation; and therefore lacked discrim-

ination. In like manner, he assumed that if his son had good in him, that good would come out; and if he thought that a child were bad, his favorite axiom was that no man could save his brother's soul, or be his brother's keeper. In fine, my father lived his whole existence upon assumption, and he never discovered whether his assumptions were sound or false. He brought me up on the theory of an ideal conception of human nature, very beautiful in its faith, but unfortunately not practical. He had faith in my developing only the bright and best side of myself; and here is the point: he assumed that I did so! He was proud of me and put me upon a pedestal and gave me sympathy at a distance, with the result that I could not leap into his arms and tell him that it was not so, that my little life was not bright! And so throughout my entire childhood I was hungry for the little details of affection which a man does not know how to give. The fact is, I never had any young boyhood. Fate also robbed me forever of the grand schemes and the unconscious fun which a few playmates give a child. My father and his club friends who came up from Richmond were my playmates. They used to sit at table, and sip their claret after dinner; and I would sit with them, too, "always looking and listening," as I overheard one of them describe me. Then

they would walk out over the plantation; and I would walk with them, too, and hear the stories at which they laughed, many of which I used to ponder over in order to find out what was so funny in them. One especially I used to remember, that my father would tell whenever we walked through the old red gate in the woods. It was told of my name-sake, the famous Mr. William Wirt. He told how Mr. Wirt used to visit in the neighborhood, and how one day at the time when my grandfather had just had that gate hung, Mr. Wirt passed by and said:

"Ah, sir, anybody can hang a gate, but only men can propagate!"

Then they would laugh. I puzzled for years over that story.

My father had a tutor for me whom they called "Doctor." The truth is, he was a pensioner on us with whom my father liked to converse. He did not teach me one iota of the usual textbook knowledge. He did not believe in machine-made learning. But it was a general education for me to go about in his company and browse here and there in our library. Actually, I have not read thirty books in my life all told; but that good man taught me that if a book is worth reading at all, it is worth reading slowly.

"What conceit!" he used to say, "for one to try to digest in a few hours what has taken another years to think out!"

He told me that it took him a year to read "The Newcomes."

I have to thank him for one inestimable heritage, which laid the foundation of my religion. He taught me concerning the Omnipotence of Truth. In this lies all my faith. He taught me 'to dare to stand alone, to dare to have an opinion of my own and to dare to make it known.'

"Beware though," said he, "it is the part or mark of youthful vigor to discover that things are not altogether right in this unintelligible world; and youth sets about to mould things over to his own satisfaction, only to find that he has himself been cast in a mould."

I think that he and my father, who dearly loved to moralize, used to sit and talk and smoke on our back porch for fourteen hours out of many a day, calling out occasional suggestions to the negroes as they worked in the garden. So I used often to leave them and go fishing in the canal. I used to catch chub with a pin hook. Oh, to watch again those old canal boats as they glided under me, as I sat upon the bridge; oh, to dream again that they were moving fairy lands, going up and

down to realms, marvelous and weird, to which I might some day travel and enjoy their unlimited pleasures. That was my chief source of delight.

The day when I was to take one of them came sooner than I had hoped. My father took me on a visit down in Goochland, and I met little Susanne, she was twelve and I was thirteen. A flood of warm light seemed to fall upon me and to thaw out my boyish spirit. But I am not going to write about her any more. I can not stand it. She had my mother's eyes, "wistful and mild." My father was as pleased as Punch over our fondness for each other. Poor man! I thank God that he was spared the end of that long attachment. He died even before I lost Susanne. He rode off one day on a new stallion. I climbed on the zig-zag fence and watched him disappear down the plantation road. When he reached the creek, the stallion threw him against the rocks and broke his neck. Uncle Robert and Sandy and I brought him home.

Don't pity me. Call me a mad dog, say that I am a peculiar idiot, say that I have been a fool and wasted my life; but don't pity me! And if there is one thing more abhorrent to me than self-praise, it is self-pity. I am disgusted with myself, who might have amounted to some one. Then I would not have been lonely, physically lonely.

And there is mental loneliness, more galling, more gnawing, than murky solitude.

The following blames no one except myself:

"I felt myself pressed onward by an internal force, which I could not resist.—Let us look into this a little, and see whether the direction you gave to your life has not had for its object to make this force irresistible."

That may be. But I prefer to know what I actually am, than to be proud and contented in a *cul-de-sac*. Tumble-bugs roll from rut to rut, clinging to their eggs, never knowing that they are tumble-bugs. I would rather be unhappy than be the man with illusions, snug in his own pettiness. If contentment comes only from rolling in a rut, then I choose discontent.

"Come, review your days and your years, call them to account! Tell us how much time you have allowed to be stolen from you by a creditor, by a mistress, by a patron, by a client." Which of us can read those lines without blushing?

This night is my birth night. Nine and twenty years ago, at eleven o'clock, when the July sun had sunk out of the valley of the James, when the cattle were at rest, and the whippoorwills uttered forth their conscience-stricken notes, "Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!" the moon had arisen and shone upon the purple bloom of the fox-grapes,

hidden above the brook, then a deep joy came over my mother and she was delivered of me. It must have been the blessed, unspeakable, sacred joy of labour, which men never know. My father told me once that she wept in the midst of her joy—that is how I know.

XIII

Suffering, suffering. Oh, mystery of pain! Then surcease from pain. And pain again. Oh, mystery of death, the *sure* relief. And yet I can not bring myself to do that.

"You must have sleep at any cost," my doctor says, "or the mind will give."

Courage! courage! Bring in the pitcher and the bowl, Sandy; I need more courage. My doctor is right. The mind is the whole thing. The memory and the imagination can conjure up the few supreme moments of my buried life when she sat beside me and rested over me, looking down into my eyes, as we were stretched at full length beneath the crab-tree blossoms. There is her father's house upon the hill, a white house with the old balcony porch; there is the row of servants' quarters, whitewashed in the sunshine, and the little negro children playing under the swaying hollyhocks—and here am I beside her, and she by my side. She wears a blue sun-bonnet, turned back, and a low collar, revealing her soft, delicate neck. Gently she tosses my hair, and smooths my eyebrows with her sensitive fin-

gers. Ah me, my arms yearn forth, and I let my head fall in her lap, and almost—almost fall asleep.

"Dearest boy," she whispers, her lips moistening my ear, and I catch the rare aroma of her hair, "my boy, my boy, the ecstasy ahead of us when I shall hold you close, so close! See the new moon in the day sky, dear? I think of a time when she will shine upon us two together, covering us with silvered light until I might just see you dimly enough to stroke your face. Twelve more moons and the thirteenth we will pledge together, and lie here under our crab-apple tree, you and I alone, you and I and the wind—oh, I mustn't think of it. Sometimes it makes me almost wild."

Then came the rapids and the whirlpools in the gulf of my development. And I sank. When I came up again, I had lost her.

I can not stand this any longer, Sandy. My thoughts are running away with me. Let us go for a walk. You must always stay with me, Sandy, won't you? I will leave all my money to you.

"Maarstar, you hab no right to say such things to me. You knows I never did stay wid you for no money. You knows I doan't reckon 'bout

money. I only wants to see you get well, maarstar."

"What is the use of trying to get well, Sandy, when Miss Susanne is gone?"

"She not gone, maarstar, no, 'deed, she not gone. Miss Susan's just a-waitin' and a-waitin', an' you'll find Miss Susan over yonder, maarstar, you see if you doan't, and then you hab to say to yerself, Sandy was right all the time. The Bible says so, maarstar, the Bible says so."

XIV

Yes, this is a delightful toy-shop. Now we are going by a whole row of Noah's Arks. I stop to raise the lid on one of them, and there are all the animals. Little Frances, who is holding my hand, notices particularly the giraffe, because he has such a long, spotted neck, and can look down upon the other animals with disdain. I inform her that the giraffe is the only animal that has never been heard to utter a sound.

"Isn't-it-terrible!" says she, in one breath.

"No," I said, "it must be blissful."

Frances does not comprehend her cynical father; and so we move along. She says that her mother told her to tell me that we could take plenty of time to look at the toys, as mother had to be fitted for two gowns.

Sam declares that he wishes I would buy him that big boat over yonder. And he tugs me off by the other hand to examine it, but on the way our attention is diverted by a remarkable looking doll which Frances has discovered. Sam forgets his boat and decides to stand and stare at the doll. I confess this doll is attractive, for she seems to be

precisely what she pretends to be. So I buy her and give her to Frances, and then the three of us make more headway. We get as far as the pop-gun counter. I never did like pop-guns. They are too symbolical. But Sam pulls me down to him and whispers:

"Dada, pease get me one. I need it."

His little fat fingers stroke my face and persuade me in spite of myself. How often does he remind me of his mother! He has the same helpless, beseeching manner with which Susanne has always managed to get what she wanted.

Then we succeeded nicely. We got past the sleds and the hobby-horses and the moolley-cows and the dreary donkeys. I never knew how we did it. But Sam threw out an anchor when we reached the marbles. Those huge crystals and beautiful agates were too much for him.

"Dada, pease buy me some."

"How many, my son?"

"All's you can."

"Well, give us a boxful;" I said to the indifferent clerk. Imagine being indifferent in a toy store, surrounded by little children. Here is certainly the one place where I would search for the Fountain of Eternal Youth. But now it is time to meet mother, and we picked up the doll and the pop-gun, and scurried off through the

other shoppers. My two children snuggled close to me.

The door opened and in walked old Sandy, carrying a fresh pitcher of sangaree. I was startled into my senses.

"You drove them away, Sandy."

"What I done do, maarstar?"

"You drove them away. I was out shopping with Miss Susan and the children."

Sandy thinks that my brain is "addled," as he calls it, and so he makes no further answer.

Children! My children! The dream children whom poor Charles Lamb saw. And how many other lonely folk have seen them?

Look at that shelf of books there; see that volume bound in limp leather? That was my first book. You did not know that I was a writer, did you, Sandy? Yes, but I was. And when I wrote that book I thought that I knew more than I did. It is about young love and interfering parents and selfish relatives and romantic folk who went astray. It is crude, very crude; but I love the book, for it was my first-born. I thought of recasting it, and then I found that one can not mangle his own child.

The volume next to it, that one in stiff boards, I am more proud, perhaps, of that one. I tried hard to tell the truth as I saw the truth in it, even

though I knew that readers do not really want the truth. We live our life under a vast veil of mystery, humbug and fear. And so I wanted to tell young boys and growing girls why they felt strange feelings and had new thoughts as they gradually became men and women. I wanted them to know how simple, natural and beautiful the whole realm of being is; and above all, that their fresh, confused feelings and glowing thoughts are not abnormal, nothing to be ashamed of, perfectly healthy and vigorous, if only their parents would tell them so.

And as to humbug, I tried to show silly women and foolish men how unhappy and strained they make their lives by assuming emotions which they think they possess, and by expressing thoughts which mean nothing, because they have never thought them out. How easy this world would be if we could all of us simply be ourselves, as a dachshund is only a dog, a donkey a donkey, and a cat a cat. Then there would be no imitations, no misunderstandings, no mistakes, no subtle motives, no boring waste of time.

Lastly, I attempted to handle the broad, ever-present cloud of fear. Why do we fear to be frank? Why are we afraid to say things which all of us think and know? We even fear death, though each one has to realize deeply that

we are every one of us dying men. With this homily and more too, I tried to help mankind in that second volume in stiff boards. And when it was finished and printed, I grasped the fact that the whole book was trite; that those same things had been said and resaid and said again from time out of mind, doing no good, as long as men are men, and women are women.

Bring me that book with the worn, sheepskin covers, Sandy. Ah, how I love this recent child, who longed to make people do their own thinking and their own believing by giving them bits of our vast heritage of philosophy which only a few have the time or the inclination to read. But readers will not endure moralizing, said my tactful self. Therefore, give them bits of philosophy in action! Alas, I know that it, too, is abortive.

What! I reach out now, and my dear, dear books are gone! My gold turned to crumpling, dead leaves. They, too, were dream children, were they? Children of my mind, as the others might have been children of my body. Farewell, little Frances and Samuel, concrete happiness that never was. Farewell, my books, visions of undone good.

XV

There is a mirror over the mantel-piece in my study. For months I have tried not to look in mirrors, except when I have finished dressing, and then only to see if I am normally presentable. But this night the room grew chilly past midnight, and I arose and went to hold open my dressing gown before the red logs in the grate. Sandy went to bed over an hour ago, and I did not care to rouse him to build a huge fire.

As I was standing there, I leaned forward absent-mindedly on the mantel-piece and placed my head in the palms of my hands in such close proximity to the mirror that the fleshly features and the illusory features touched. I gazed upon my face intently.

The sight stirred the most profound depths within me, not for sorrow, not for pity, not for age, not for the changes, but the realization that it was I. Actually I! I, as I *am*. Look at these eyes, even they alone tell the story, a tale of trying to be what I was not to be; of trying to be good and pure and sinless, of wishing for a little success as other men succeed; of wanting a mate. My

mate! to be by my side, she who could have steadied my passion, and have grown old as I grew old, she who could have kept me from all these wretched acts and thoughts; and then—then I lost! I slipped; I fell. And this face shows it. These eyes show it. They see failure, utter, bleak, barren failure. The Great Gambler gives us the dice to throw once, and only once. We lose or we win. I lost.

Ah God, must I once more be wakeful with hot tears? I think of the men and the women I know—of you—of you; how did the dice come up for you? What have the figures read?

As I am gazing thus in the mirror, my eyes wander to the other part of the reflection which shows the darkness of the opposite end of the room, for the lamp is beginning to flicker. Out of that darkness comes a boyish figure, and this new sight makes my eyes nearly start from their sockets.

But is he a new figure?

He advances a step out of the darkness. He is young and supple, about seventeen. I still have my eyes on him in the mirror. This moment he caught my glance! He steps nearer, keeping my eye and trying to laugh, and yet, oh, how wistful that look really is.

"Who the devil are you?" I asked, without

turning from the mirror and half closing my eyes in an effort to search his countenance.

"Oh, I reckon you know who I am;" he said flippantly, with a Southern accent.

"Sit down, won't you?" I said, without turning around to greet him. And then with impudence he sits himself down in the very chair which I had recently vacated. I still retain my position and watch him in the mirror.

Looking up at me, he began again:

"No one would think, from the manner in which you recognized me, that we are as closely related as father and son."

"It's a lie," I answered, calmly, "why do you accuse me with a lie?"

"Oh, don't excite yourself," he came back, "I am the guilty party. I am the father and you are the son. Certainly you have often heard that the boy is father to the man?"

"Aye, and the child, sire to the boy."

"Look at yourself. You are seeing you that are, while I am you that used to be. I reckon you know me now."

I stared again at my misbegotten self in the mirror, the self that is, and I thought upon what had just been uttered by the self that was. A weird truth came to me, and I spoke this thought aloud:

"You have spoken correctly, for if the boy is father to the man, he may beget a legitimate self or an illegitimate self. You, damn you, you did not create the self that might have been, but begot me, a bastard self."

"Well," he said defiantly, "I admit it. What then?"

"Why did you do so—why did you ruin your future—why did you wish me to be a failure?"

"Why was I weak?—that is what you mean. Well, my son, I can not tell you. It was in me and it had to come out. Perhaps my ancestors were to blame; perhaps I alone was to blame. They say we are masters of our fate. I doubt it. Surely no more sensitive, passionate youth longed as actually as I did to make you noble and true and generous. Was there ever a grander wreck? Look at yourself. Gaze into the diorama of your mind, and what do you see?"

I looked and saw the dismal pomp unroll before my mental eyes. And I saw a mass of indecision.

"Behold! there come the Ghosts of Past Intentions. I was going to marry the love of my life—that is the saddest ghost of all. I intended to be industrious and win fame for her—and see what I have done—nothing—and my life is sailing away, growing dimmer and dimmer, until now my worthy craft is a weather-beaten derelict

even before my prime. This ghost gets up with me in the morning, sits with me at meals, reads every book I hold in my hand, goes on all my walks, sips each glass of my sangaree, retires to bed with me at night. This ghost is Insomnia Incarnate.

"Here comes another procession—the Imps of Lost Opportunities. Why was I not able to grasp them? The next company of players tell the tale. They are the ever-present giants, tyrants—Weak Resolutions—weak, weak, weak—back to the word you spoke!"

But lo, as I spoke, the lad took his leave. He could stand the arraignment no longer, and hot tears welled his eyes.

"You were too hard on him," a voice within me cried, "he did not mean to do what he did. It was not to his interest to ruin you. Do you not recall those lines he read in adolescence, and predicted that each syllable would come true of himself. He has not lied. He knew."

"What were the lines?" I asked.

"Here they are:

'Even so it was when I was young.
If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.

It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth;
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults—or then we thought them none.' "

DUNLEVY ABROAD?

It would do no good to give more extracts from Dunlevy's manuscript, for my object is not to lay bare his entire work. If these fragments have afforded some insight into the character and opinions of this otherwise unknown man, then my purpose has been fulfilled.

Here would be the place, were I equal to it, to speak of him as a man and as a writer. After the manner of some biographers, perhaps I ought to see him standing alone, in lofty transports of thought and inspiring actions. On the contrary, I should much prefer to see him doing ordinary things. I would like to bring him near to us. I would like to make him more than a mysterious person. But both of these views are denied us. It is not as though Dunlevy were a statue which could be observed from any angle. I have had to take him as I found him.

In his life that has left behind it so few traces, I am at a loss for facts upon which to base any judgment. If I may speak for myself, I own that I have little intellectual sympathy with him in any

way. I find nothing hopeful or inspiring in his writings. Somehow, he was always striving, and always failing, to go to the bottom of everything. He wished to give proof of more penetration and ethical intuition than he possessed. Are not his thoughts, after all, superficial? Does he get us anywhere? We, in this workaday age, must *get* somewhere. Sometimes I think that the chief reason why certain novels have plots is to get us to the end of the book, and that *is* somewhere.

"He teaches nothing, because he decides nothing; it is the very opposite of dogmatism. He is vain.—Hey! all men are, are they not? And those who seem modest, are not they doubly vain? The *I* and the *me* are on every line; but how should we ever have any knowledge except through the *I* and the *me?*" So wrote Madame DuDeffand once in a letter to Horace Walpole.

Yet I feel even in these few fragments of his the presence of an earnest and attaching sensibility. They show us Dunlevy struggling with a life-long secret, whose nature it is as difficult to read as its influence upon the whole trend of his temperament it is impossible to deny. Way back at the time when he wrote me his letter, in which he confessed a weakness for drink, one can see what a despairing glance he casts upon his life. Whatever this youthful secret was, we can only

conjecture. He never tells us. He never so far forgot his private dignity and his instincts as a gentleman as to publish the reason why he did not marry. Here, the reader, if he has the desire, must go the rest of the way himself. I have referred to it now for the last time, because by so doing it becomes easier to speak of his manuscript. "The physiology and hygiene of a writer have become one of the indispensable chapters in any analysis that is made of his talent." So says Sainte-Beuve. The result was that this effort to conceal his trouble and yet speak openly of himself gives all of his papers their personal note. That is why he has to walk on that delicate line between the real and the supernatural, maintaining his balance and always seeming to know where he is. That is why at times he sounds as though a Theosophist were talking to his Mahatma. Hence the styles, the moods, the visions, of this sane or insane man.

That Dunlevy spent much of his time in idleness and apparent emptiness of mind can not be denied. He was indolent. He tells us so. He was born under the Southern sun at a period when indolence had recently been aristocratic and at a premium. This very inability to adapt himself to energetic work, constitutional though it was, seemed to haunt him with the idea that he was indeed a

useless being. To call his little volume of scattered sheets literally the memoirs of a failure was no misnomer. And he knew it.

To be born indolent and to have also a delicate conscience is an unhappy birth even for normally healthy mortals who have a cheery home. But in addition to his physical inertia, to be at the mercy of an irritable temperament, and to be a wandering recluse, was enough to make Dunlevy go under. And I fear that he did so.

I imagine that Dunlevy kept going from one disappointment to another, trying to repair past errors by some new effort. He must often have asked: How is it that with intelligence and so much remorse, you are still so little master of yourself? "The sore of his whole life is there—unbelief and desire."

After sending me his box, he disappeared from America and apparently went into hiding. Stripped of the sparse details which I have been able to gather about him, Dunlevy's life is lacking in outward incident; for the most part, it is a complete blank. We wonder how it is that we know so little about a Rabelais or a Shakespeare. What do we know of our nearest neighbor? In the present case but one thing seems certain: tragedy seemed to follow tragedy in the life of William Wirt Dunlevy. He lost his mother when he was a

little child; he lost his father when he was not more than a grown boy; he lost his young betrothed on the very verge of approaching marriage; he lost his faith; he lost his health; and he lost his ambition—all before the age when most men have not felt even one of these sorrows.

There remain, and always will remain, many dark places in his experience. And it has seemed to me that it would be a breach of friendship for me to attempt to throw light upon either his family history or his private life, aside from what he gives in his own papers. It would savor too much of professional biography. I do not know the man's age. I have never sought out even the full name of his father, nor his mother's maiden name. It was sufficient for him to tell me in his own letter that he had neither kith nor kin. That closed further inquiry.

Perhaps it will not do for me to go no deeper into the meaning of Dunlevy's documents, if I propose to offer them for public scrutiny, even though I personally feel that the moment one begins to analyze their meaning, the meaning disappears. So it is with pleasure. The moment you become conscious of pleasure and try to handle it and to label it, the pleasure vanishes, and you pursue a flying goal. Spontaneous happiness is never conscious. And the meaning of personal,

spontaneous writing may be felt, but not epitomized.

What, then, does Dunlevy mean?

I repeat that I am unable to state his meaning, though I believe that the man had something to say. Perhaps if I should force myself to phrase a hypothetical meaning, I might say that the difference between happiness and unhappiness is the difference between positive and negative thoughts. Positive thoughts are constructive. And Dunlevy unconsciously illustrates by means of his own personality that he cherished negative thoughts, and was therefore a negative man. But Dunlevy does not allow us to dismiss him with the trite conclusion that because sentiments are personal, they are necessarily autobiographical. He makes us go further, and asks: "Why should I have been a failure? I admit that it was because I had a weak will. But how did it happen that my will was weak? Does the onus of the blame fall upon my ancestors and myself or upon civilization?" He makes both share the responsibility, but he brings his stronger indictment against our civilization; because he proves that he started out with clean instincts and a desire to do good. This is the only way that I can account for his writing two such papers as the one in which he introduces the Strange Professor, and the other

in which he writes as a little child, side by side. In the former, he shows himself on the very verge of acute insanity, fighting to save the control of his reason; and in the latter, he shows that he had it also in him to lie awake in the dark and ponder that once he was not so, that once he was "a little brown-headed boy, unfettered with the knowledge of evil," and with the potentialities of goodness and deep affection in him, and of a decent ambition to amount to some one. Two such papers as these were actually found by me written side by side in his manuscript book; and I noted that the calm, saner one was written after the other.

No, no, it will not do to dismiss Dunlevy as a bitter, bad-minded egoist. No, no, that will not do. The man was utterly dissatisfied with the outcome of his life. You can be no more disgusted with him than he is disgusted with himself. And if there be truth in the main drift of his contention, what boots it whether he was sane or insane? He believed in the Omnipotence of Truth, no matter how much we, transitory atoms, try to cloud Truth by befogging each other and hoodwinking ourselves.

One summer, not long since, I went to spend a part of my holiday at Narragansett Pier in Rhode Island. My room overlooked the ocean, and at night I used often to sit after the hotel went to sleep and watch the great red August moon rise out of the horizon. Now and then the fog would partly mask her, revealing the general outlines of her figure like a loosely fitting night-robe. Beneath this weird atmosphere of shifting mist over the silver column of light reflected upon the swaying surface of the waters, a dim steamer appeared in the vaguest shape. Her lights were all that could be distinguished, shining out like the eyes of wild animals upon the shore of a hidden continent.

"She is a phantom ship;" I said to myself.

Soon I saw that I was mistaken, for the vessel headed toward the beach and anchored immediately before my window. The moon sank, the wind rose, the waves beat against the rocks, and I fell asleep.

I thought no more of this familiar occurrence when I awoke the next day. I went down and had my swim, and when I came back, there stood my phantom ship. But oh, what a difference! She was in full dress, flags of all colors and designs hanging from her rigging. A noisy launch waited

near her, and I saw by the raising of her blue flag that the owner was about to go ashore.

"What is the name of that yacht?" I asked of my hotel proprietor.

"She is the Festoon," he answered, "she belongs to Commodore Crowther."

"Crowther! What Crowther?"

"The Newport Crowther," said he, "there is only one Crowther so far as I ever heard of. Surely you have heard of Crowther, the pickle man?"

No, I was sorry, but I had not heard of him. I had been in the far West a number of years and was quite ignorant.

"Well, well, that's funny," said he, "I thought everyone ate pickles. Look, that's his cottage over there on the point."

"You mean that building that looks like a court house?"

"Well, yes, it cost more than most court-houses;" said he, "and if you wait here long enough you may see the commodore, for that's his oldest son there on that polo pony. He's J. Chester Crowther, and he must be waiting for his father."

And then my proprietor suddenly deserted me. I saw the reason for his quick departure. A huge automobile, puffing the announcement of im-

portant arrivals, had drawn up at the door. Reporters and photographers hovered about it.

The heavens might drop at my feet and I could better believe the sight than what now met my eyes. A portly gentleman, with the native swagger and sure mien of a thoroughbred aristocrat, mounted the hotel steps. A hush fell upon the surrounding chatter. And here came my shock. He was none other than Crowther, the football player, whom I had known a decade before at the University of Virginia. In those days of youthful cynicism, some students used to say that Crowther played football for money. No matter; here he was now, with a string of obsequious friends, ladies and gentlemen, following in his wake. Reporters to the right of him, photographers before him, lackeys behind him.

He held a levee on the porch steps for a few moments, and then came down the veranda where I was sitting, thus cutting off every means of escape. Not that I had the least idea that he would remember me, but still I did not care to give him the chance to forget me. He advanced cane in hand. From his walk, it was evident that the heavy society act had become Crowther's long suit.

"Why, how do you do!" he said, holding out a tightly gloved hand.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Crowther;" I said, lying in spite of myself, for which of us is not affected by contact with powerful wealth. He sat down on the porch railing, and naturally I aped his example.

"You ought to be a politician;" I said, laughing.

"How's that?"

"Because you never forget a face. You have not seen me for over ten years."

"Speaking of remembering faces," said he, tapping me with his cane, "whom do you think I once ran into four summers ago just as I have met you here."

"I can not imagine."

"It may be you won't even remember his name —that queer stick—a—why I have forgotten it myself—oh, yes—Dun—Dunlevy, don't you remember he used to sit with us at college?"

"In the name of God tell me where he is."

"Oh, that I don't know—so you recall him? Well, I met him over in England—down at Richmond, in Surrey. Did you ever hear of that famous hotel there, the Star and Garter?"

"Yes," I said, "Thackeray mentions it; and then I lived in Richmond once."

"Oh, did you really? Very good; then you know the spot. It was there I saw Dunlevy, wheeled around by an old darky."

"Wheeled about? Was he an invalid?"

"He was suffering from locomotor ataxia, so I was told. Really, the poor chap aroused my pity, and I left my party of friends and went over to speak to him. He had never heard of me nor I of him since we left college. Think of that! And when I told him that I had become the largest pickle grower in the world, what do you think he said?"

"Tell me?"

"He said, 'Crowther, that's why you used always to be saying, "Pass the pickles, please."' Ha, ha. That was the only time I saw him. He didn't seem to want to talk; it seemed to tire him; and his old negro wheeled him away into the shade. Poor chap, what a mess he has made out of life! I don't suppose you know that he came of one of our oldest Virginian families. I own an estate which adjoins what was once his father's plantation. I hunt partridges down there every fall—you will pardon me, but I see that I am keeping my guests waiting. I must leave you. Be here long? Come to see me some time at my cottage. Mighty glad to have seen you."

As he walked down to his automobile and thence drove to his launch, I said to myself, Crowther, a metropolitan man of affairs, a landed proprietor, a member of our noted society, an

American millionaire, known wherever pickles are eaten; and—and—what was it he called the obscure exile whom he met—"a mess."

Even the mad Lear asked: Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out.

Who was William Wirt Dunlevy? Where is he? What was he? A failure?